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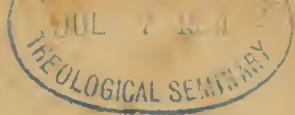
My dear Mother

I hope you are well







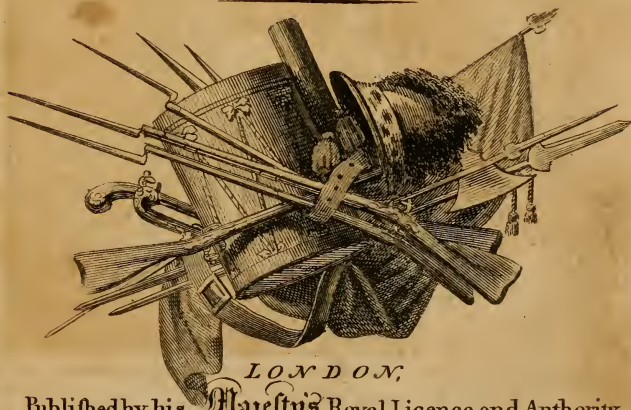


H I S T O R Y  
OF THE  
W A R  
WITH  
*AMERICA, FRANCE, SPAIN,*  
AND  
H O L L A N D;  
*commencing in 1775 and ending in 1783.*

By JOHN ANDREWS L.L.D.

*In Four Volumes with Portraits Maps and Charts.*

Vol. I.



L O N D O N;

Published by his Majesty's Royal Licence and Authority.

For JOHN FIELDING, *Pater Noster Row*; and JOHN LARVIS in the Strand.

MD CCLXXXV.







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GEORGE R.

GEORGE the THIRD, by the Grace of GOD, KING of GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, and IRELAND, DEFENDER of the FAITH, &c. To all to whom these Presents shall come, greeting: Whereas JOHN FIELDING, of Paternoster-Row, in the City of London, Bookseller, and JOHN JARVIS, of the Strand, in the Liberty of Westminster, Printer, have by their Petition humbly represented unto Us, That the Petitioners have been at great Expence and Labour in preparing for the Press an HISTORICAL ACCOUNT of the WAR with AMERICA, FRANCE, SPAIN, and HOLLAND, commencing in the year 1775, and ending with the Definitive Treaty in the Year 1783; written by JOHN ANDREWS, Doctor of Laws: that the Operations of Our Fleets and Armies having been more extended than in any War carried on under the auspices of a British Monarch, and the Petitioners being unwilling to conceal any Fame justly acquired by Our Subjects, have sought for and obtained Information Military, Naval, and Political, from all the four Quarters of the Globe: That the Petitioners have also employed the first Artists of our Kingdom to Engrave the Copperplates, (a part of the Work) from original Drawings, and from the best Charts; and the Petitioners are desirous of repeating the Fruits of their Expences and Labour, and of enjoying the full Profit and Benefit of Printing and Vending this Work, without any Person interfering in their just Property, and which the Petitioners cannot prevent without Our Royal Licence and Privilege; the Petitioners therefore most humbly pray, We will be pleased to grant unto them Our Royal Licence and Privilege, for the sole Printing, Publishing, and Vending the said Work, in as ample manner and form as has been done in cases of the like nature. We being willing to give all due Encouragement to this Undertaking, are graciously pleased to condescend to the Petitioners Request; and We do therefore, by these Presents, as far as may be agreeable to the Statute in that case made and provided, grant unto them the said JOHN FIELDING and JOHN JARVIS, their Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, OUR ROYAL LICENCE AND AUTHORITY, for the sole Printing, Publishing, and Vending the said Work for the term of fourteen Years, to be computed from the Date hereof strictly forbidding all our Subjects within our Kingdoms or Dominions, to Reprint or Abuse the same, either in the like, or in any size or manner whatever; or to Import, Buy, Vend, Utter, or Distribute any Copies thereof, Reprinted beyond the Seas, during the said term of four-



teen Years, without the consent or approbation of the said JOHN FIELDING and JOHN JARVIS, their Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, under their Hands and Seals, first had and obtained, as they will answer the contrary at their peril, Whereof the Commissioners and other Officers of our Customs, the Master Wardens and Company of Stationers are to take notice, that due obedience be rendered to Our Pleasure herein declared. Given at our Court at St. James's, the first Day of June, 1785, in the Twenty-fifth Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command,

S Y D N E Y.



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## INTRODUCTION.

**N**O Nation ever terminated a war more to its advantage and glory, than that which Great-Britain carried on against the united powers of France and Spain, and concluded by the Treaty of Paris, in one thousand seven hundred and sixty-three.

The strength of the British nation had been conducted by the most spirited and fortunate Minister that ever presided over its councils, and had been exerted with a vigour and energy unexampled in any preceding æra: an uninterrupted series of successes attended it in every quarter of the globe, and victories followed each other by sea and land, that astonished all Europe, and thoroughly subdued the spirit and broke the strength of the enemy.

The terms of the pacification that ended this memorable contest, though not so advantageous, in the opinion of some, as the state of this country on the one side seemed to claim, and to expect, and the depreſt ſituation of its enemies might, on the other, have ſubmitted ſtill they were ſuch as exalted the British monarchy to a degree of ſplendour and power, that rendered it equally the envy, the admiration, and the terror of Europe.

By this treaty Great-Britain remained en-



tire mistress of the immense continent of North America, from the banks of the Mississippi, to the shores of Greenland. She acquired several valuable islands in the West Indies, and established her power in the Eastern parts of the world on such extensive foundations, as left her a decided superiority over all the European nations that have any trade or settlements in those distant countries.

But there were no few politicians both at home and abroad, who thought they perceived in this splendid conclusion of her dispute with France and Spain, infallible, though perhaps latent causes of much future mischief. The entire cession of the French possessions in North America, an immense tract, opened a wide field of speculation to people of a thinking disposition.

While this prodigious extent of land remained in the hands of France, though it might seem a heavy curb to the industry and enterprising temper of the British nation, it was, in fact, a boundary to the ambitious spirit of its Colonies. By restraining them within determinate limits, and keeping them in perpetual alarms, it obliged them to look continually for aid to the parent state, and obviated all ideas of disobliging a people, of whose friendship and protection they stood in perpetual need.

It has even been surmised, that France itself fully saw the consequences of her cession of Canada to England, and that some of the shrewdest of the French Ministry did not refrain



frain from dropping some hints to this purport. However that might be, it may with great truth be said, that no profound penetration was necessary to discover, that the acquisition of the French North American possessions, by delivering the British Colonies from all apprehensions on that dangerous quarter, gave them immediately an ease and security in their domestic transactions, to which they must for ever have been strangers; and, of course excited a train of ideas, which they would not, and could not otherwise have harboured.

While the dread of France was present to their minds, ages would probably have elapsed, before they would have thought of facing so great a power singly, and unsupported. The long habit of depending on the assistance of the parent state, would have been retained; and as protection and obedience are reciprocal, the connection that had so long subsisted between Great-Britain and her Colonies, would, in all likelihood, have remained the same as before, unimpaired, and unaltered, in every circumstance attending it.

To these considerations, others might be added of equal weight:—The state of the British Colonies at the æra of the general pacification, was such as attracted the attention of all the politicians in Europe. Their flourishing condition at that period was remarkable and striking; their trade had prospered in the midst of all the difficulties and distresses of a war, in which they were so nearly and so immediately concerned. Their population continued on the



increase, notwithstanding the ravages and depredations that had been so fiercely carried on by the French, and the native Indians in their alliance. All this shewed the innate strength and vigour of the constitution of the British Colonies.

The conclusion of the quarrel between Great-Britain and France, placed them immediately on such a footing, as could not fail to double every advantage they already possessed.— They abounded with spirited and active individuals of all denominations. They were flushed with the uncommon prosperity that had attended them in their commercial affairs, and military transactions. The natural consequence of such a disposition was, that they were ready for all kind of undertakings, and saw no limits to their hopes and expectations.

As they entertained the highest opinion of their value and importance, and of the immense benefit that England derived from its connection with them, their notions were adequately high in their own favour. They deemed themselves, not without reason, entitled to every kindness and indulgence which the mother-country could bestow.

Though their pretensions did not amount to a perfect equality of advantages and privileges in matters of commerce, yet in those of government, they thought themselves fully competent to the task of conducting their domestic concerns, with little or no interference from abroad. Though willing to admit the supremacy of Great-Britain, they viewed it with a  
suspicious



suspicious eye, and with a marked desire and intent speedily to give it limitations.

Their improvements in all the necessary and useful arts, did honour to their industry and ingenuity. Though they did not live in the luxury of Europe, they had all the solid and substantial enjoyments of life, and were not unacquainted with many of its elegancies and refinements.

A circumstance that places them in a very meritorious point of view, is, that notwithstanding their peculiar addiction to those businesses and occupations of which lucre is the sole object, they were duly attentive to cultivate the field of learning. They have ever since their first foundation been particularly careful to provide for the education of the rising progeny. This is strikingly applicable to those Colonies that are properly called New England; and among them to that of Massachusetts.

Their vast augmentation of internal trade, and external commerce, was not merely owing to their position, and facility of communication with other parts; it arose no less, if not more, perhaps, from their natural turn and temper, full of schemes and projects; ever aiming at new discoveries, and continually employed in the search of means of prospering and bettering their circumstances.

This disposition carried them into every quarter from whence profit could be derived. There was hardly any port of the American hemisphere to which they had not extended their navigation; they were continually ex-



ploring new sources of trade, and were found in every spot where business could be transacted.

To this extensive and incessant application to commerce, they added an equal vigilance in the administration of their affairs at home.--- Whatever could conduce to the amelioration of the soil they possessed, to the progress of agriculture,---in short, the improvement of their domestic circumstances was attended to with so much labour and care, that it may be strictly said, that Nature had given them nothing of which they did not make the most.

In the midst of this solicitude and toil in matters of business, the affairs of government were conducted with a steadiness, prudence, and lenity, seldom experienced, and never exceeded in the best regulated countries of Europe.

When the British American Colonies are considered in these various points of view, it is not surprising, that feeling their own worth and consequence, they should cherish the most partial sentiments in their own behalf, and look upon themselves with that esteem and respect, which consciousness of great worth naturally engenders, and that they should at the same time, betray impatience and discontent at whatever might seem to place them in an humble and inferior light.

All these were sufficient motives to induce Great-Britain to treat them as states whose friendship and good-will were highly to be prized, and which now were only to be retained by the wisest and most temperate measures,  
after



after their total emancipation from those dangers to which they had so long been liable, from the proximity of a formidable and enterprising enemy.

But independent of these divers considerations, a cause had long subsisted, of which the effects had been foretold, whenever the obstructions that stood in their way should be removed. This was the republican spirit that carried the first emigrators to the shores of New England, in the last century. Persecuted at home for opinions in religion, ill agreeing with the established tenets in church and state, their adherence to their own was so rooted and invincible, that sooner than part with them, they chose rather to abandon their native country, and fly to the remotest and most inhospitable regions, in order to enjoy the unrestrained and public profession of their own sentiments.

Such a resolution, though produced by enthusiasm, was nevertheless great and heroic: it supported them in difficulties of the most serious magnitude; it carried them through a world of obstacles. To say that in leaving England, they had deprived themselves of those comforts that are most grateful to human nature, the pleasures and delights of the home we are born and bred in, is not doing justice to the courage and magnanimity of the first settlers in New England. To speak with truth, we should acknowledge they had every hardship to encounter that can assail the heart, and stagger the fortitude of man. The climate



was against them in every shape; it was entirely new to their constitutions; the winter cold, and summer heat, equally insupportable; the productions of the earth miserable and scanty; the soil stubborn, and of little value: Sickness and death were the destiny of an alarming proportion of the first adventurers.

When through unconquerable perseverance they had weathered the first storms that await all great undertakings, they had still a most arduous task to undergo in securing themselves from the malevolence and jealousy of the ancient inhabitants of the land, whose native ferociousness, inflamed with indignation at seeing a foreign people in possession of a country of which they were once the sole masters and occupiers, impelled them to exert their whole rage and fury for the destruction of these newcomers.

Thus they had every obstacle to surmount that could try their patience, and prove their firmness. The victories they obtained over these complicated obstructions, raised their character to a level with that of the bravest people recorded in history, in the estimation of the few who can consider facts divested of that splendour which time, place, and circumstances, are apt to bestow upon them, and from which they derive their lustre with the generality.

The remembrance of the causes of the emigration of their forefathers is strong throughout the provinces of New England, and was always a favourite subject of discourse. The principles



ples that animated them, have been carefully transmitted from generation to generation, and are faithfully and zealously maintained to this day. The religious part of their enthusiasm has been dropped, but the political part subsists unimpaired, and in its fullest vigour; and no people are more warmly attached to the preservation of their rights and liberties.

To this it is owing that no branch of knowledge is cultivated with more assiduity than that of the law; the addition to this particular study is general, one may almost say universal, every New England-man being more or less of a lawyer.

Hence it is, that persons of genteel education among them are remarkably more conversant in the laws and constitution of their country, than their equals in any other parts. This enables them to render their attainments in learning and literature, which are very considerable, highly subservient to the service and benefit of the public.

The four New England governments being thus originally founded and peopled by the Puritanic party in England, during the last century, we are not to wonder at the veneration entertained for their character by their descendants, nor at the warm adherence professed by these for their political and religious tenets.

The partiality to republican principles, that so distinguishingly characterizes the people of New England, flows from this source. It strongly marks and influences all their measures, and is hardly less visible in their private life,



life, than in their public transactions. This might be exemplified by a variety of instances. They cherish the memory of the great champions of the republican cause, in the days of Charles the First, to such a degree, that even before the Revolution that has deprived Great-Britain of America, it was common to see their pictures and prints placed in the same room, in a line with those of the British Monarchs.

When all these considerations are duly weighed they form an irresistible proof that a desire of independence of any authority inimical to Republican tenets, must always have existed in the minds of men, who had been traditionally, as it were, under their powerfulest influence.

Their invariable conduct upon all such occasions as favoured these principles, proves how deeply they were rooted in their hearts. It is well known with what exultation they partook of the triumphs of the Republican party in England; and with what unfeigned sorrow they received the news of the restoration of monarchy, in the person of Charles the Second.

That so high-spirited and resolute a people would certainly embrace the first opportunity of asserting a cause that had been so dear to their ancestors, was obvious to all who had studied their character, and were acquainted with their story. From a variety of passages, it affords the highest probability that they would not have waited for the present day, to dismember themselves from the empire of Britain, if circumstances had invited them. Notwithstanding



ing the impracticability of bringing about such an event, it had its partizans and abettors almost in the infancy of their colonization. Ideas of this tendency prevailed among them so long ago as the reign of the aforementioned Monarch.

If the people of New England are unfriendly to monarchy, they still bear a greater aversion to the Church of England. The severe treatment of their ancestors by Archbishop Laud, dwells ineffacably in their memory; and the mildness of the present Ecclesiastical government in England, has not been able to atone for the errors and transgressions of some of its former rulers. They seem to look upon the Hierarchy as a body of men calculated for the support of arbitrary power; and often cite the servile attachment of several English Prelates to the absurd maxims of passive obedience to the will of the Sovereign.

As resistance to a tyrannical government is the foundation-stone of their political system, they view with equal contempt and abhorrence all men who profess unlimited submission to their Princes; and as they insist upon a perfect equality among all their religious teachers, they no less disclaim all ranks and degrees that confer Spiritual authority among the clergy.

Thus their inclinations and maxims are equally unfavourable to those on which the government of Church and State is founded in England. Notwithstanding the good sense and moderation prevailing among them, prevents their breaking out in harsh language, yet  
their



their invectives, though polite, are not the less pointed, and manifest an irreconcilable enmity to the religious and political constitution of the mother-country.

This frame of mind is universally diffused over the four provinces of Massachusset, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. The inhabitants, with few exceptions, are of that religious persuasion known by the denomination of Congregationalists, or Independents.

The leaders and ruling men among them are all rigid dissenters from the church of England. None but such have any chance of becoming popular. The small numbers who profess the religion of the parent state, are beheld with an invidious eye, and as secret foes to the country they live in.

There was a time, indeed, when they were held in such detestation, that they were not even tolerated by the adverse party. Strange as it may seem, this outrageous behaviour was predominant at the very æra of their emigration, when their debility was such, that a royal mandate from England would have sufficed to crush them. One knows not on this occasion at which to testify the most surprize, the audaciousness of their conduct, or the passive forbearance of the English ministry.

The truth was, that religious zeal only promoted the colonization of New England. The first settlers, who fled to a wilderness for the sake of maintaining their opinions against all opposers, were determined to suffer no contradiction: they persecuted therefore all who dis-  
fared



ferred from them, and seemed resolved to retaliate, as it were, for the persecution they had so long endured. As policy, and worldly considerations, had little or no share in their actions, they were totally regardless of the danger they incurred by the violence with which their conduct was attended; and they continued many years to act in the same manner, to the great scandal of the moderate and judicious part of society, and the high disgrace of their own character.

Such was the situation of the British Colonies in general, throughout North America, and of the New England provinces in particular, when the pacification above-mentioned opened one of the most remarkable scenes that ever commanded the attention of the world.

The French, who have for many ages been the profest and natural enemies of England, had long viewed, with equal envy and apprehension, the flourishing state of those Colonies she had founded in North America. In order not to remain behind-hand with a rival, whose growing greatness they were always studious to oppose, they also made settlements in that wide-extended continent, and endeavoured to make up by policy, or by force, the deficiencies of soil and situation, in the countries that had fallen to their lot.

As the nature of their government is more favourable to military than to commercial exertions, they accordingly formed unnumbered projects of that kind for the aggrandizement of their colonies. They erected a multitude of  
forts



forts and fortifications, thrown like a chain over every part of the continent, where they could frame any pretence of settling, and calculated to connect establishments and territories at an immense distance from each other.

But as ambition and prudence are often apt to be at variance, they forgot that without wealth and population, no territory can be worth defending. Thus amidst the immense tracts throughout which their soldiery was stationed, nothing was seen but the apparatus of war; military piles of building, and magazines of warlike stores, rising in the midst of deserts. The country round was a solitude, planted with forests, and only visited occasionally by savages, in their hunting seasons.

Far other was the policy of their English neighbours:—Instead of consuming themselves in unprofitable attempts at a needless extension of territory, they confined themselves to a careful cultivation of what they possessed, and never thought of augmenting it, but in proportion to the demands of an increasing population.—Thus their advances were gradual; they never came forward till the ground they left behind them was well tilled and occupied.

Such a difference in the system of colonization, could not fail of producing the most opposite consequences. At the expiration of a century after their respective foundations, the possessions of France were comparatively poor, barren, and thinly inhabited; while those of England were rich, fertile, and full of an industrious and thriving people.

Long



Long before the breaking out of the war between Great-Britain and France, in one thousand seven hundred and fifty-five, the French had at various times entertained ideas of effecting a separation between the English and their American Colonies. Convinced it was not in their power to subdue them by force of arms, still however they persisted in their design, in hope of finding some means of wresting them out of the hands of England.

In the mean time, their natural impatience and impetuosity unable to bear with much delay, was continually prompting them to hasten an event, from which they promised themselves so much satisfaction.

They again betook themselves to their former schemes and contrivances: claiming territories that were in possession of the English, and incroaching upon those settlements that lay nearest to them, and appeared the most open and defenceless.

When the spirit of the British nation, provoked at those insults, was sufficiently roused, they then perceived how feeble and unavailing their plans must prove, and how little they could depend upon the exertions that France could make in that part of the world.

But it was now too late to recede:—As they had called forth their enemy to an open contest, they were obliged to stand the chances of war, and to collect their whole strength and vigour for a trial that threatened evidently to prove the last that would ever be made by one



of the contending parties in the plains of North America.

After the events of war had decided in favour of Great-Britain, it now remained for France to bring about through her policy and intrigues, what she had not been able to compass by her valour and military skill.

The circumstances of the times were highly favourable to her wishes. The European powers did not see without secret dissatisfaction, the amazing increase of the power of Great-Britain, through so many lands and seas. They began immediately on the conclusion of hostilities, to view this island in the same light they did France during the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth; as a state whose power was too disproportionate for the peace and security of Europe; and upon which therefore it behoved them to keep a watchful eye, that no opportunity might be lost of reducing it within narrower bounds.

As its strength arose in a great measure from its American dependencies, it was chiefly these that European politics immediately had in contemplation to sever from their original founder.

By breaking the connection between them and Great-Britain, a multiplicity of advantages offered themselves to their expectations. The view of profiting by the immense trade they promised themselves, in a free intercourse with those flourishing colonies, was alone a sufficient motive to engage them to labour earnestly for their emancipation from the sovereignty  
of



of Great-Britain; but the principal object of their attention was to stop the growth of the strength and influence of England, which had been widely felt before and during the late war, and were now become so formidable, as to occasion universal alarm and terror.

Through her colonies in the Western hemisphere on the one hand, and her possessions in the East Indies on the other, she seemed to grasp, as it were, both extremities of the globe, and threaten to monopolize the absolute dominion of the ocean.

The maritime powers of Europe, in particular, saw this exaltation of Great-Britain with the extreme jealousy. Holland had felt its weight during the late war, in the interruption of that trade which the Dutch had exerted themselves to carry on clandestinely for the French. The northern kingdoms had also experienced its superiority in the same line; and they all were eagerly waiting for an opportunity to set limits to her power.

But it was chiefly from France the principal danger arose. Her resentment was incessantly brooding over the mortifications she had received in her last quarrel with England. She saw her ancient rival glorying in her spoils, and deriving new strength and vigour from her losses. She saw her recovering fast from the distresses inseparable from war, and in the fairest way of arriving in the course of a few years, to a state of strength and opulence that would set her above the reach of any ho-



stile designs from abroad, and fix her in a condition to give laws to all her neighbours.

Full of this conviction, which was in truth well founded, the French ministry were soon convinced, that the only method left them to destroy that edifice of British grandeur, which gave them so much umbrage, was to undermine it.

It was a reflection highly offensive to the pride of a monarchy, long accustomed openly to domineer over all her neighbours, that she must now place her principal dependence on under-hand intrigues, and dark contrivances, and trust to them, alone for the accomplishment of her designs.

No doubt at present subsists, that she began immediately after the Peace of Paris, to carry into execution the scheme she had formed for the separation of the British Colonies from the mother-country.

Conscious that whilst a good intelligence lasted between them, the superiority must henceforth remain for ever on the side of Britain, it was only by their disunion she could hope to regain the station and consequence she had formerly possessed in Europe.

The first steps she took were to employ her secret emissaries in spreading dissatisfaction among the British Colonists. Their importance was described in the most flattering colours, and their strength represented as an object of greater magnitude than the possessors seemed aware of. The partiality of Great-Britain to her own interests, in the various regulations



lations of their commerce abroad, and administration at home, was depicted in the strongest light. No insinuations, in short, were wanting, to excite a spirit of discontent throughout the Colonies, and to infuse a notion, that it would be highly for their interest to cast off all dependence, and to stand intirely upon their own ground, free from all the shackles and restraints with which they were at present loaded.

These sentiments were far from unacceptable to a people already prepossessed in favour of that liberty which was so temptingly held out to their perceptions, and no less prejudiced against the prerogatives exercised over them in such a variety of shapes. They were in the situation of an individual bordering on manhood, and who beginning to feel his vigour, is no longer willing to submit to much controul.

The effects produced by the machinations of the French, were precisely such as they had intended and expected. The disposition of the inhabitants of North America began gradually to alter from that warmth of attachment to the mother-country, which had so peculiarly characterized them. They began to view her rather in the light of a sovereign, than of a parent, and to examine, with a scrupulous nicety, the nature of those ties that rendered them parts of her empire.







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# H I S T O R Y

OF THE

## W A R.

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### CHAPTER *the* FIRST.

#### *The Stamp Act and its Consequences.*

**S**UCH was the situation of the North American Colonies, when those measures took place in England, that were productive of the greatest events that have happened within many ages.

The long and bloody war that Great Britain had waged against the united strength of the House of Bourbon, though highly successful, had been equally expensive. The triumphs of our fleets and armies in so many parts of the world, had been purchased at an enormous price; and both the blood and treasure of the nation had been profused to obtain them.

The debts contracted by the nation in the support of the last and former wars, amounted to the amazing sum of one hundred and forty eight millions; for which an interest of near five millions



was annually paid. These immense charges were born with a patience and equanimity not inferior to the spirit and resolution with which they had been incurred ; but they were a load under which the nation began to stagger.

Taxes of every denomination were levied upon the public. Every branch of business was examined ; and every channel of trade explored, in order to assess them with their proportion of contributions.

After straining, apparently to their utmost bearing, the resources left at home, the idea was suggested of calling in the assistance of the Colonies, in a more direct and explicit manner than had hitherto been done.

As the late quarrel had been occasioned chiefly on their account ; and as they derived the great and principal benefits of the peace, it was thought equitable they should make some more than common returns for those advantages.

Their ability to contribute largely to the common exigencies, was deemed indubitable ; but their willingness was no less called in question ; and it was represented as an attempt full of danger, to make use of compulsion in case they should refuse.

Whatever might be the necessities of the mother country, the Colonies were fully persuaded that the sole and exclusive enjoyment of their whole trade, was a tax in itself more than proportionably adequate to all those that were levied upon the people of Great Britain.

This plea had undoubtedly its weight in the apprehension of all moderate and impartial people ; but while they allowed the Colonists to alledge it as a reason for treating them with great lenity in the point of taxation, they did not, at the same time, imagine that it was a conclusive argument for their declining



declining to afford any other kind of relief to the parent state.

England in securing to itself the exclusive trade of her Colonies, acted upon a principle adopted by all modern nations. She did no more than follow the example set before her by the Spaniards and Portuguese; but she followed it with a lenity to which the government in those nations is an utter stranger.

In planting these distant Colonies, she endowed them with every right and privilege enjoyed by her subjects at home: She left them at full liberty to govern themselves, and of framing such laws and regulations, as the wisdom of their own legislatures should point out as necessary for the good of the community over which they presided. In short, she gave them the amplest powers to provide for, and pursue their respective interests, in the manner they saw fit; reserving only the benefit of their trade, and of a political connection under the same sovereign.

The Colonies founded by France and Holland, and before them by Portugal and Spain, did not experience the same indulgence. The two latter not only claimed the monopoly of their commerce, but governed them in many respects with a rod of iron: burthening them with an endless chain of vexatious regulations; cramping every exertion that seemed foreign to the views of the rulers at home, giving no encouragement but to what tended directly and immediately to their own interest, and punishing severely whatever had a contrary tendency.

Though France and Holland did not adopt such oppressive maxims, yet they were, in fact, not much less strict and coercive. They sold, as it were, the propriety of their Colonies to mercantile associations, which, in order to make the most of their bargain, loaded them with every incumbrance that  
a mono-



a monopolising spirit can suggest: selling to them the commodities of Europe at an enormous advance; taking the produce of their lands at the lowest prices they could compel them to receive; and discouraging the growth and cultivation of any more than they could dispose of at an unreasonable profit at home.

Such was, for a length of time, the unjust policy observed by France, in particular, towards her Colonies: the consequences perfectly corresponded with so absurd and barbarous a system. Her transmarine possessions long remained without any settled form or consistency; and never emerged to any prosperity; till taught by dear-bought experience, administration saw the necessity of taking them out of the hands of their monopolisers, and placing her Colonists on the footing of other subjects.

England never treated its Colonies in this ungracious, illiberal manner. Content with the general profits resulting from their trade, she left it open to every individual in her dominions. She did not confine it to particular ports, as in Portugal and Spain; nor give it up to the extortion of a company of merchants, as in Holland and France.

Thus her Colonists, notwithstanding some restrictions, possessed an immense stock in trade on their own account. Independently of the direct remittance of what grew on their lands, to the shipping that sailed from England to receive it, they carried on a large exportation of their domestic commodities, which, through the indulgence of the metropolis, was not confined to her sole harbours, but extended by judicious and well-timed regulations, to various parts of both hemispheres.

Hence the unreasonable gains so common in the sale of European merchandize, in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, were unknown to those belonging to Great Britain; where many articles were



as cheap, and some even cheaper than in England itself, through the expertness of men conversant with business, in the advantageous management of their stock.

No such thing is seen in the Spanish and Portuguese settlements; and but little of it in the French. Few are the trading vessels belonging to the former, and those of an inconsiderable and diminutive size. The capital ships that visit their harbours, arrive from those of Portugal and Spain. Such is the narrow monopolizing disposition of both these countries, that they sail in fleets, under the command of officers commissioned by government, as if it dreaded to trust them to any other management. It is but lately the Court of Spain has altered some of her regulations in this particular.

There was a generosity even in the restrictions of Great Britain, on the trade of her colonies, that shewed they were not imposed in the wantonness of power; but evidently with a design to repartition, as it were, the exercise and profits of commerce among the various inhabitants of her wide-extended dominions.

While her subjects at home were free to trade to all parts of the world, the same permission in a numerous variety of articles, was granted to her colonists; the northern climes of Europe, and the East Indies only, were excepted. In Portugal, Spain, Italy, throughout the Mediterranean Sea, on the coasts of Africa, in all the American hemisphere, the vessels of the North American colonies enjoyed the most unbounded and lucrative commerce.

The encouragement given to this commerce was equally wise and beneficent. It tended in the directest manner to the improvement of their country, by increasing its commodities through an abundant exportation, and enabling them to clear and cultivate



cultivate the soil, through the sure and constant sale of the vast quantity of timber for all kinds of uses, that accrued from the cutting down of their immense forests.

Beside these two advantages, both of a capital and essential nature, they possessed others hardly less beneficial. They carried rum and sugar, together with the produce of their fisheries, to every market within the above specified limits. These branches employed such a multitude of shipping, that the ports of those countries where they traded were continually visited, and often crowded with them.

True it is, that a number of articles were also appropriated to an importation into Great Britain exclusively; but when we duly consider this matter, it will be found that the very nature of the countries possessed by the Colonists, gave them sufficient occupation at home, without rendering it any ways necessary for their prosperity, that they should employ themselves so much abroad, as the inhabitants of a soil occupied by a numerous people, and whose tillage had lasted for ages.

It was reasonable, therefore, to allot them principally the task of clearing and cultivating the immense tracts they inhabit; this would always prove a profitable business, and enable them to procure themselves, on their own bottom, a never-failing fund, from whence to supply all their wants, and to furnish, besides, a plentiful supply for the purposes of trade.

The proof of this is, that those places which are in the highest cultivation, abound most in riches and people. The population of Pennsylvania, which was founded fifty years after some of the other colonies, bids fair, in time, to exceed them all.

In the mean time, the trade in those articles of which Great Britain reserved the benefit to herself,



self, did not interfere with the main pursuit of the Colonists. This being chiefly the purchase of the conveniencies of life, there was certainly no country where the Colonists could find them generally in greater, if so great perfection; and, considering their intrinsic value, where they could find them cheaper.

Another consideration occurs, and that of the most material nature. The situation of the Colonies is such, that it often happens in their dealings abroad, that a long course of credit is necessary for them. This they can find no where but in England. The opulence of our merchants is so superior to that of those in any other country upon earth, that it enables them to wait for the returns of their trade, much beyond the time that any others can afford.

Neither should it be forgotten, that the amplest liberty of trading in all their reciprocal commodities, subsisted between North America and the English West Indies. This was a fund from whence they derived immense resources; as it opened a channel through which they carried out a world of articles of their own produce, and received supplies not only for their own consumption, but for the demands of that extensive commerce which they carried on in so many parts of the globe.

Thus it appears, that notwithstanding the several restraints that took place on the American trade, enough was left to render them a rich and flourishing people. That they were such in reality, is well known to all who have the least acquaintance with that country. Its happiness was visible to all who visited it. If ever any country might have been stiled the seat of human felicity, British North America most unquestionably deserved the appellation.

To say that no partialities existed in favour of Great Britain, would certainly be a violation of truth;



truth ; but let an unprejudiced man weigh in the scale of Justice, the conduct observed by Great Britain towards her Colonies, and that which foreign states have pursued in respect to theirs, and then let him decide, which is the most consistent with humanity, justice, and policy.

The great complaint of America, was the discouragement of manufactures, by confining every province to the use of its own, and preventing the reciprocal importation of their respective fabrications. This, it cannot be denied, was a severe regulation ; but when we reflect, on the other hand, that most, if not all of the articles thus prohibited, could be purchased at a cheaper rate from England, the idea of severity naturally annexed to such a prohibition, is much diminished ; and it almost vanishes away on the additional consideration, that the hands thus employed would have been much more beneficially taken up, both in a public and in a private light, in the great and important business of agriculture, or of navigation.

It ought, nevertheless, to be allowed, that to curb the disposition of a whole people towards any branch of industry or ingenuity, is a measure to which it cannot be expected that human nature will tamely submit. It is viewed as a species of affront to the understanding. The detriment that may possibly arise from the prohibition, is not so much represented as the prohibition itself.

As mankind, therefore, will generally bear oppression much more easily than insult, it is probable that the rigorous injunctions precluding the sale of any manufacture of their own make, beyond their provincial boundaries, appeared to the Americans as calculated to crush their native talents in the very infancy of their exertion, and to cut off the very hope of ever arriving at those advantages to which they were of right intitled.



Preventions of this nature are always the more odious, as they seem levelled at the abilities of a people, and designed as it were to keep them in a state of natural inferiority. For this reason, undoubtedly, they were esteemed a heavy grievance throughout the American colonies; and every individual conspired, as it were, as much as in him lay, to elude them.

It was probably owing to the discontent arising from regulations of this sort, that the liberality with which Great Britain acted in other instances, was overlooked. She not only abstained from the laying of duties on her own manufactures, but took off those on foreign articles when exported to America. Herein her conduct was very different from that of the other European states with regard to their Colonists, whom they force to receive such goods, loaded with all the duties they are charged with in their own ports.

While this indulgence lasted, goods of foreign fabrication were often considerably lower in price, in some of the colonies, than in some parts of Europe itself.

It was not, therefore, without great murmurs and complaints in the Colonies, that a cessation of this indulgence took place immediately after the war. They looked upon this measure as a prelude to others still more disagreeable; and began to think that Great Britain meant to try how far she might render them subservient to her convenience, and to what extent she might do it without endangering her own interests.

They were full of these ideas, when the British Ministry, alarmed at the amazing increase of smuggling, and the prodigious losses it occasioned to the revenue, took the resolution to use every possible effort in order to prevent it. To this intent, which in itself was perfectly just and reasonable, a scheme



was proposed and embraced, which proved highly pernicious in its consequences, and rendered the remedy much worse than the disease.

A number of armed cutters were stationed around the coasts of Great Britain, to the commanders of which the strictest orders were issued to act in the capacity of revenue officers. They were enjoined to take the usual Custom-house oaths, and to observe the regulations prescribed by them.

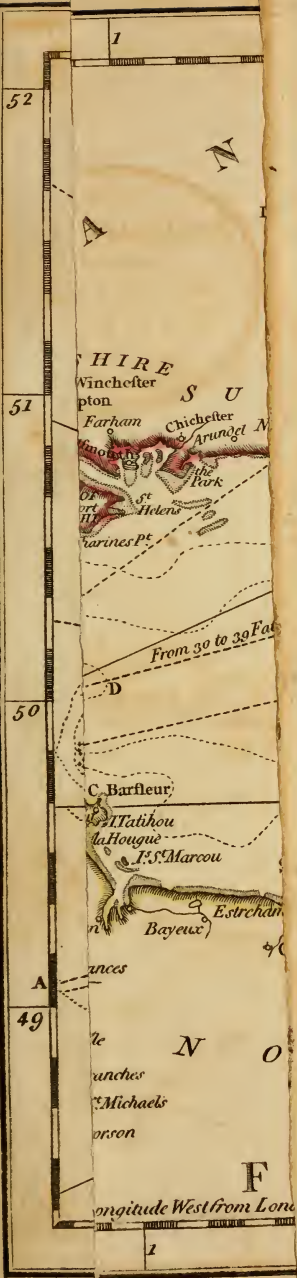
Never was a more ignominious duty imposed upon men of gallantry and spirit. It sunk the brave and enterprising seaman into a meer tide-waiter. That eagerness and zeal which had been employed in the search and attack of an enemy, was now exercised in the discovery and seizure of prohibited goods; and the courage which they had displayed in the service of their country, was now directed against their fellow subjects.

Had these unwise measures, however, been confined at home, the evils they produced would have been so much circumscribed, that on due experience of them, they might in time have been obviated; but as one wrong step is generally productive of others, the same unfortunate spirit that planned them for the coast of Britain, extended them to the shores of America.

The outcry was great against them in England; but in America it was outrageous. As it could not be supposed that gentlemen bred in the naval service were conversant in the laws and usages of the Custom-house, they were often guilty of infringing them. Remedies were at hand in England; but in America it was difficult, and in some cases almost impracticable to obtain redress, from the tediousness of forms, and the distance of places.

To this grievance, which weighed heavy throughout a country where much liberty of trade had been suffered







THE  
BRITISH CHANNEL,  
including  
*the COASTS of*  
ENGLAND  
and  
FRANCE.





suffered and connived at, another quickly succeeded, no less, if not more obnoxious to the trading part of the community.

A lucrative branch of commerce had, for more than a century, been carried on between the British islands in the West Indies, and the Spanish settlements on the vast continent of South America : it had for many years been largely participated by the North American colonies. It was a commerce of the clearest gain and benefit to the British trader ; it consisted in a prodigious exchange of all kinds of British commodities for the precious metals.

Sensible that the advantages lay entirely on the side of Great Britain, and was ruinous to the interests of Spain, that monarchy had always opposed this commerce with all its might. Guarda-costas were commissioned to scour the wide-extended coasts of her American dominions, and to seize every vessel that approached too near them ; a task which they executed with such indiscriminate license, that it provoked the war which broke out between Great Britain and Spain, in one thousand seven hundred and thirty-nine

But though this commerce was in direct opposition to the orders of Spain, and could not therefore be considered as strictly legal, it certainly was not the business of Great-Britain to prevent it. The new system however adopted by the British ministry, was pursued as if a convention had been made with the Spanish Court for that very purpose. The British cruizers acted as if they had received their commissions from Spain, and were to be rewarded by her for destroying this commerce. They did it effectually ; and in a short space of time it was almost wholly annihilated.

This to the Northern Colonies was a deprivation of the most serious nature. This traffic had long proved the mine from whence they drew those sup-



plies of gold and silver, that enabled them to make copious remittances to England, and to provide a sufficiency of current specie at home. It gave life to business of every denomination, by the facility with which payments were made. A proportionable increase of trade kept pace with this readiness of cash, and a reciprocal circulation of money and merchandise was established, to the benefit of all parties concerned.

A sudden stop being thus put to this prosperous career, all America felt it to its vitals, and broke out in the loudest complaints against the servile complaisance of Britain to Spain; and the ill policy of disobliging its own subjects to humour foreigners.

Their complaints were justly founded; but the evil star of Britain began to predominate: the Ministry continued in the resolutions they had taken; and, as if these had not done sufficient mischief, they followed them, with others no less offensive to the Americans.

In the Session of Parliament of March, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-four, a Bill was framed, laying heavy duties on the articles imported into the Colonies from the French and other islands in the West Indies, and ordering these duties to be paid in specie into the Exchequer of Great Britain.

The injustice and absurdity of this new law, both of which were equally glaring, excited, afresh, the murmurs of the Colonists. They represented, in the strongest terms, how inconvenient it was, after depriving them of the means of obtaining specie, to insist upon their paying those duties into the British Treasury in specie alone.

But that which perplexed and incensed them more than all the rest, was the Bill passed in the same Session,



Session, to restrain the currency of paper money in the Colonies.

All these new regulations treading so close, as it were, upon each other, were objects of equal surprise and displeasure to the people of North America. It was a scheme to them, in some respect, entirely new; as notwithstanding various laws had, from time to time, been enacted regarding their commercial intercourse, they had usually been made at considerable intervals, and did not wear that appearance of restraint and coercion, nor weigh upon them in the manner of the present.

Warm and spirited remonstrances were sent home from America, pleading their cause in the language of men who think themselves ill used, and are determined to obtain redress. They laid every argument before the Ministry, that ingenuity, prompted by interest, could furnish them with: they reasoned, they expostulated; in short, they used every method that could be employed, to prevail upon the ruling powers to recall what they had done.

Among other allegations, they explicitly mentioned that such restraints upon their trade were inadmissible in America, as they directly tended to put an end to the clearing of their lands, and the prosecution of their fisheries. Unless those foreign ports where they deposited the surplus of their corn, and of the provisions of all kinds abounding in their country, were freely opened to them, whither must they carry them? The British islands in the West Indies could not alone consume them. Britain did not want them. Dispose of them somewhere they must; and where could that be, unless in places where they would fetch a reasonable price?

It were the height of partiality to deny the validity of these reasonings: it was obvious to all discerning and judicious people; their case was not,



therefore, left to them alone to maintain; it gained a multitude of partisans in the mother country, and was openly and warmly espoused by some of the most respectable characters in the land.

But in America they did not stop at bare complaints. When they found that their remonstrances were ineffectual, they bethought themselves of using some more efficacious means to convince the British Ministry of the error they had committed, in running counter to the opinions and designs of a numerous people, situated at such a distance, and able, in a variety of ways, to elude their intentions.

They now, for the first time, united in a general opposition to the views of the British Ministry. Meetings were held, and resolutions were taken to make no further importations from Great Britain of what was not of absolute necessity; and to encourage, to the utmost of their power, every species of manufacture that was practicable among them.

In this resolution multitudes immediately concurred, to the great detriment of the manufacturers in England, who were not sparing of their disapprobation of the ministerial measures, and expressed it in the most violent and resentful terms.

But the Ministry was proof against all kind of opposition. It proceeded, step by step, in the execution of its projects; as if nothing was wanting to complete them, but a firm resolution to do it.

In order, however, to mix lenity with firmness, they passed several Acts favourable to the commerce of the Colonies, hoping thereby to sooth them into a submission to those that had given them so much disgust.

But the Colonists were now become so full of suspicions, and placed so little reliance on the good will of the Ministry, that their whole attention was taken up in devising means to thwart their measures. They paid little regard to these concessions, which  
they



they now looked upon as meer artifice, used only to decoy them into security and inattention to their own interests.

They were further confirmed in this belief, by the advice they received shortly after, that the Ministry had it in contemplation to establish stamp duties in America similar to those already settled in Great Britain.

The pretence upon which the Ministry founded this measure, gave as much offence as the measure itself. It was voted by the House of Commons as just and requisite towards defraying the expences necessary for the protection of the Colonies.

The receipt of this advice roused the fury of the Americans to the highest pitch. The protection that was alledged, they deemed not only unnecessary, but an absolute nuisance. They wanted, they said, no protectors but themselves; and were more than adequate to such a task against any enemy they had to apprehend.

The military forces that were stationed over several parts of the Continent, they represented as equally dangerous and expensive. They were, from the nature of their profession, a constant check upon the liberty of the subject; and were at the same time a heavy charge on the public.

It was in vain pleaded by the mother country, that a regular body of well-disciplined men was an indispensable requisite in all states. This might be admitted in England, and other countries in Europe; but was evidently otherwise in America, where the Indians alone remained, whom it was no very difficult matter to keep in awe.

The truth was, that Great Britain, under the pretext of providing for the safety and defence of its colonies, meant only to secure their obedience, and to terrify them into an implicit acquiescence in all its dictates.



Such were the sentiments that pervaded all America, when first they were apprized that taxes were to be laid upon them, for the support of the troops on that establishment.

The previous notice of a Bill of this kind being in agitation, has, by some politicians, been condemned as a step that betrayed wavering and hesitation in the Councils of the mother country, and that betrayed too much of fear and want of resolution, for the Colonists not to perceive it. Had the Ministry proceeded at once to carry its resolves into immediate execution, they would have met with much less resistance, than by making them known in this manner, a full twelvemonth before they ventured to give them the force of law. This was, in fact, putting the question to the people of America, whether they would consent to them or not.

The interval between this notice and the approaching session, that was to determine their fate, was marked in America by the most violent fermentation. The minds of the inhabitants seemed to be undergoing a total transformation from their preceding state. Instead of their late peaceable and steady attachment to the British nation, and its interests, they were daily losing their respect, and falling off from that complying disposition which had so long characterized them.

It was not only among detached individuals that such a disposition prevailed; it was no less visible among their public and corporate bodies; and affected even the members of their government and legislatures. The General Assemblies of Massachusetts and New York, expressed their dissatisfaction and alarm, in terms that fully shewed how strongly they were determined to reject any measures that might be framed in conformity with the present views of the British ministry.

They



They did not stop here.—They came to some resolutions, in consequence of those that had been taken in the British House of Commons, which amply manifested how inflexibly they were averse to them. They accompanied their resolutions with petitions to the House of Commons, intreating them to give no countenance to the proposals of the ministry.

During the spring session of one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five, administration informed the agents of the several colonies, resident in London, that if their constituents would propose any other mode of raising the sum intended to be levied by stamp-duties, their proposal would be accepted, and the stamp-duty laid aside. The agents replied, that they were not authorised to give any answer; but were instructed to oppose the bill, when it should be brought into the House of Commons, by petitions, questioning the right claimed by Parliament of taxing the Colonies.

Full time had been given them to canvass this dangerous question in the amplest manner. They had prepared a diversity of arguments in opposition to the Parliamentary pretensions. They objected, that the powers intended to be given to the Vice-admiralty courts in America, by the act for laying stamp-duties, would prove a source of intolerable grievance, by their distance from each other; and still more, by their deciding without the intervention of a jury.

They alledged, at the same time, that the payments required by the act being in specie, would infallibly drain them of the little coin remaining for necessary circulation, and prove an insurmountable impediment in the way of trade.

But that which they urged as the most cogent, and most forcible of all arguments, was,—that not being represented in the British Parliament, it could have no right to tax them. This they affirmed



ed in the most open and explicit terms ; asserting, at the same time, that they alone were competent to judge what taxes they were able to bear. They claimed, therefore, the right of exercising this judgment exclusively, and of imposing taxes upon themselves, without the interference of any others.

This was a language which Great-Britain had never before heard from her Colonies. The ruling powers listened to it with anger and indignation.— But it was not the Colonies alone that spoke in this stile :—It was taken up with no less warmth and resolution even in the Parliament itself, and was now spread over the nation at large. The principles adopted by the Americans, were maintained by numbers, with as much vehemence as if the cause of the Americans was their own.

The ministry were equally chagrined and astonished at the violence with which so great a proportion of the nation espoused the pretensions of the Colonies. As the system of taxing them had been previously determined upon, they knew not how to recede from a measure that was to be the first essay in that important trial. They were loath to abandon at once an attempt, from which they had promised themselves so much utility, in case of success. They were as eager to go forward in the prosecution of their scheme, as their adversaries were that they should desist, notwithstanding they clearly saw the perils that must attend it.

But the time was now come, that Britain was to be involved in the most tremendous and destructive quarrel that had befallen her for the course of many ages.

Impelled by that prepossession in favour of a long cherished idea, which the best and wisest men are so often not able to resist, and hurried by that impetuosity which the heat of party naturally inspires, the ministry bore down all opposition. The stamp-



act was passed by a Parliamentary majority, in spite of the arguments within doors, the clamours without, and the spirited and repeated remonstrances of the Colonies.

This famous act has justly been considered as the prelude and occasion of all the subsequent storms, that raged not only in North America, but extended their horrors to almost every other quarter of both hemispheres.

Its arrival in America threw immediately the whole continent into flames. Boston, the capital of New England, where the news first arrived, expressed its resentment in a manner perfectly suitable to the violent spirit with which its inhabitants have always opposed whatever they have deemed injustice and oppression. The colours of the shipping of the harbour were hoisted half-mast, the bells of the churches were muffled, and tolled a funeral peal; the act was printed with a death's-head affixed to it, in lieu of the king-arms:—It was cried about the streets, and stiled “The Folly of England, and the Ruin of America.”

These first effusions of resentment and rage, were followed by numberless attacks from the public papers. They arraigned both the justice and policy of the tax; and represented it as repugnant to the dignity and wisdom of the British nation, and as pregnant with every evil that could cause a long and deep repentance.

Emblems of the most hostile signification were at the same time adopted by sundry news-papers:—One of them, in particular, exhibited the figure of a snake, cut in several pieces, each one inscribed with the name of some Colony: the motto above them was “JOIN, or DIE!”

The act itself was treated with the most ignominious contempt. It was publicly committed to the flames in several places by the enraged populace,  
together



together with the effigies of such as were imagined to have been its framers and promoters. Ships that arrived with stamped papers on board, were obliged to deliver them up into the custody of persons appointed to prevent their being used ; or to enter into an engagement that they would not land them. The only places where they could be effectually protected from the fury and insolence of the multitude, were men of war, and garrisons.

The persons who were commissioned to distribute these papers, were all, without exception, compelled to resign their office, and solemnly promise never to resume it.

But their chief resentment was directed against such of their own countrymen as sided with Government, and were active in asserting its authority.— They plundered their houses, destroyed their property, and used their persons with the utmost indignity.

While these outrages were perpetrated by the lower classes, the better sort did not interfere in the least to prevent them. They saw, with secret pleasure, how well they would be supported in the determination they had formed to resist the designs of Great-Britain. Some of them did not scruple to signify in a public manner, that they would pay no taxes, but such as were laid upon them by the legislature of their respective province.

The Assemblies themselves connived, in fact, at these tumultuous proceedings, by declining to assist their Governors, and other officers invested with lawful authority, either with their advice or countenance. They left them to act singly, as they might think proper, without giving themselves any concern about the riots, those who excited them, or such as were the sufferers.

They soon proceeded farther ; and from silent spectators, became the principal actors, in the more interesting



interesting and important scenes that succeeded to these popular commotions.

Emboldened by what they saw, and what they daily heard from all parts of the continent, they now stepped forth, and resolutely avowed their sentiments in the face of the world. They openly declared, that the authority assumed over North America was illegal; and that Great-Britain had no right to impose taxes upon them, without their own free consent.

In these resolves, the concurrence of the various Colonies was universal. Never had such unanimity appeared among them upon any antecedent occasion. Though differing in a number of essential points, both civil and religious, there was no dissenting voice among them in their opposition to the designs of the British ministry.

The Colony of Virginia was the first to begin the work of open and formal denial to the requisitions of the mother-country. It declared fully and explicitly, that the General Assembly of the Province, together with the King of Great-Britain, or his substitute, had, in their representative capacity, the sole and exclusive right and power to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants; and that every attempt to vest such a power in any other persons but those constituting the general assembly, was illegal, unconstitutional, and unjust; and had a manifest tendency to destroy British, no less than American freedom.

The resolves of the other Provinces ran much in the same strain, and bore evident marks of the most rooted and inflexible determination to abide by them, at all events, and to stop at no measures that might become necessary to support and enforce them.

In the mean time, to give efficacy to these resolutions, and to make the people in England feel more readily the consequences of their dissatisfaction,



tion, the merchants and traders entered publicly into reciprocal agreements to order no more goods from Great-Britain, nor even to permit the sale of such as might be consigned to them, after the expiration of the present year.

In order to supply the deficiency of British goods, they now betook themselves to a regular encouragement of all sorts of domestic manufactures. An association was formed for this purpose at New York, and through the premiums it offered, quickly excited the industry of the numerous emigrants that had in the course of the preceding years resorted to America from all parts of Europe. Fabrications were set on foot of such commodities as could not be dispensed with; and, in a little time, quantities of the coarsest and commonest sorts were brought to market, and cheerfully preferred to the English, though dearer, and of an inferior quality.

Such was, at the same time, their zeal and care to provide abundantly for the execution of this scheme, that a resolution was taken to abstain from the eating of lamb, that no wool might be wanting for the use of those manufactures of which it was the chief material.

Those elegancies which were of British make and importation, were now universally laid aside: the women did not yield to the men in these instances of self-denial; and were as exemplary in refusing every article of decoration for their persons, and of luxury for their tables.

Such a remarkable revolution in the disposition and behaviour of its colonies, struck the British government with the deepest alarm. They beheld multitudes of artificers, of all denominations, on the point of being reduced to the most deplorable distress. They saw the manufactories, flourishing in so many parts of the kingdom, in danger of immediate destruction. The Colonies were computed



to take off annually, full three millions worth of their produce. The loss of so considerable a branch of trade, was an idea not to be born with patience ; and yet to persist in the system of colony taxation, must inevitably occasion it, with, perhaps, more fatal consequences.

It does not, however, appear that these considerations made much impression upon the Ministry that had planned and executed the measures which now threatened so much mischief. It is probable they imagined that after the first fermentation was over, the minds of people would cool, and return of themselves to their former state of acquiescence and conformity to the will and desire of the parent state, rather than involve themselves in an altercation, that would certainly bring with it a variety of distresses, and must necessarily intangle them in difficulties from which they would not possibly extricate themselves according to their expectations.

Those, indeed, were not only the sentiments of the ministry ;—they were adopted by numbers at that time ; and continue still to be the persuasion of many to this day.



## C H A P. II.

*Repeal of the Stamp Act.*

WHILE Great Britain and America were suspended in anxious expectation in what manner these differences between both would terminate, the ministry so obnoxious to the latter was dismissed, and another substituted in its room, whose inclinations and politics were looked upon as more favourable to their wishes.

In the mean time, disagreeable tidings were daily arriving from the American continent. After severally reprobating, in their provincial assemblies, the regulations contained in the Stamp Act, these bodies, in order to confer more weight on their determinations, resolved to hold a general congress of all the colonies, wherein they might form such an union as might render them more respectable, and add more strength and weight to the opinions they should adopt among themselves, and to the representations they intended to transmit to the British Parliament.

This resolution was taken in August, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five, and was carried into execution in the beginning of October following, at New York ; in which city was held the first Congress of the American continent.

The proceedings of this general meeting of the Colonies, were conformable to those of their respective assemblies. They agreed exactly in the same resolves, and seconded them with petitions to the King and to both Houses of Parliament ; wherein they set forth with great respect, but with equal firmness, the impropriety of laying taxes upon them  
without



without their consent, and earnestly supplicated for a redress of the grievances that must insue from the continuation of the Stamp Act.

These petitions, the Americans flattered themselves, would meet with more attention from the present, than from the late ministry ; and herein they were not deceived.

When the Parliament met in January, sixty-six, the transactions upon the American continent during the preceding year, became the subject of the most serious consideration, and occasioned a multiplicity of debates and arguments.

Nor were the discussions without doors less earnest and animated. If the Americans had their opposers, it is no less true that they had their partisans ; and which were the warmest and most violent of the two, is hard to decide.

The propriety and necessity of repealing the Stamp Act, was strongly insisted upon by one party. Its inequitableness, impracticability, and, above all, its impolicy, were asserted with an infinite variety of reasonings.

The unanimity with which it had been resisted was represented in the strongest colours. Traders of the lowest degree, shopkeepers, and the commonest retailers, had agreed to drop all business sooner than transact it with the use of stamps.

Professions, the very existence of which depended on the continual use of them, had thrown up their means of subsistence, sooner than employ them. This was remarkably applicable to the gentlemen of the law, who had, upon this critical occasion, exhibited a rare example of disinterestedness.

So little was the stamp act regarded by the Americans, that they had universally agreed to carry on their usual business without it ; and so dreaded was their resentment against all who should give it the least countenance, that on the day appointed for the



the act to take place, not a sheet of stamped paper was to be had throughout the colonies.

The governors of the Colonies themselves, convinced of the unsurmountable difficulties in the execution of it, had wisely given the matter up, and granted certificates to those who applied for them, of the impossibility of procuring stamped papers.

To these arguments others were added of still more cogency, in the opinion of those who adduced them.

It was urged that in some of the most considerable places in America, the inhabitants had resolved that no remittances should be made to England, nor any suit for debt on the part of a resident in England be admitted in any court, until the abrogation of this act.

A resolution was also threatened of stopping the exportation of tobacco to Great Britain, from Virginia and the contiguous provinces; a measure which, if carried into execution, must cut off the immense sums accruing to her revenue from this article, and the vast benefits arising from its re-exportation to other parts of Europe.

Beside these, other reasons were alledged for acting with a gentle hand towards the Americans. Coolness and prudence pointed out lenient methods as far more deserving of notice than such as inculcated force and compulsion.

Taxation and representation, it was affirmed, went hand in hand in all equitable governments. They were inseparable from the principles of the British government. These principles accompanied, in their fullest extent, the subjects of Great Britain, in whatever part of the world they chose to settle under the protection of the mother-country; which, it could not be supposed, would act with such cruelty as to deprive her children of their birthright, for living in another climate. They  
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were therefore entitled to the same privileges in the land in which they dwelt, as the English themselves in that which they inhabit.

The dutiful behaviour of the Colonists on many emergencies, was no less carefully specified. The readiness they shewed in the last war was mentioned in the highest terms of applause. The zeal with which they had at all times espoused the cause of Great Britain, was exemplary, as well as the willingness they had manifested in the contribution of supplies, whenever called upon to do it in a fair and legal manner.

Their commerce alone, in the manner it was regulated by Great Britain, was, agreeably to their own assertion, represented as equivalent to the greatest and most productive taxes. The incessant increase of that alone was an inexhaustible treasure, which would not fail, in time, to ease the parent state of many, if not most of those heavy burdens under which it now laboured.

Such was the general stile and nature of the arguments with which the friends of the Colonists defended their cause, both by speeches in Parliament, and by publications dispersed and read with avidity throughout the public.

The advocates for the stamp act were no less strenuous in its support, and in their endeavours to refute the arguments and maxims established by their antagonists.

They loudly reprobated that speculative strain of reasoning which carries men out of the safe and clear road of practice, into the intricacies of meer theory. To these they imputed the unhappy altercation concerning the right of imposing taxes upon the Colonies, and the notions daily propagated of the injustice of levying money from the subject without his direct and formal consent.

The various nations that have planted colonies  
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were, said they, utterly unacquainted with such pretensions in their colonists, as were assumed by those belonging to Great Britain. They not only expected them to conform to the ancient laws of the mother country, but even to accept implicitly of those which she might judge proper to enact for them in particular.

But allowing the British colonies to be fully entitled to the rights of British subjects, it could only be in those cases where individuals are concerned in their private capacity, or the local business of the province is agitated. Where the interests of the whole empire come under discussion, the metropolis, as being the supreme head, must be allowed to decide; otherwise there is an end of that unity which constitutes, and is necessary for the existence of a state. As the Colonies could not, and did not claim a share in that decision, it appertained, of course, to Great Britain; and the only question was, whether, in thus deciding on the general concerns of that immense community of which she was indisputably the head, she had acted with wisdom and propriety.

In order to shew that Great Britain had not deviated from her usual justice and moderation, it was observed, that the condition of the Colonies was prosperous in the highest degree: ease and plenty might be accounted the peculiar attributes of the country they inhabited. All hands were continually employed, and were abundantly paid for the work they did: that the public expences they were at for the support of their government were moderate in a degree hardly conceivable, when their vast extent is taken into consideration. From the northern-most limits of New Hampshire, to the southern confines of Georgia, a space of near fifteen hundred miles, the sum expended for the maintenance of all the different civil  
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establishments in that immense tract, did not amount to fourscore thousand pounds a year.

Their church government might be deemed no sort of expence, when compared with that of England. Tithes and sinecures were unknown; and that heavy burden, the poor's rate, never was felt among them.

Protection, the great tie between government and its subjects, they had always experienced in the most ample degree. They never had recourse to Great Britain in the day of need, without obtaining the readiest and most effectual assistance.—Whether it was needed for their defence against an enemy, or to forward their domestic improvements, it was always granted with a liberal hand.

It was noticed at the same time, that a particular species of protection was afforded them; such as the colonies of no other nation can be said to enjoy. This was the constant course of credit given them by Great Britain, without which they never could have risen to that pitch of internal opulence which so justly excited the admiration of all who had seen it. When this was duly considered, the tax imposed on the Colonies could hardly be viewed in any other light than of a moderate interest for the prodigious sums they were indebted to Great Britain, amounting, at the lowest computation, to four millions sterling.

As to the plea of their deficiency in gold and silver, it was alledged to be partly, if not altogether voluntary. The precious metals may be considered as an instrument, or as an object of trade: As the first, wherever they can be dispensed with, they will certainly not be employed, and will be reserved for those occasions that absolutely require them. As the second, they will always give way to objects of greater necessity. The Colonists, who are incessantly embarking in extensive schemes of



trade, will always part with them whenever the advantages they procure are much greater than those arising from their retention, for the meer purposes of circulation. As they are only the signs of riches, wherever a substitute can be found to answer that end, it then becomes prudence to use them immediately as objects of trade, and to convert them into such materials as will of themselves be of actual service and utility; the precious metals being seldom any more than a bare medium to these ends.

The consequence, therefore, of exacting remittances from them in specie, would probably be no more than inducing them to take some part of the balance in their favour, originating from their extensive trade, in current specie, as many nations are glad to do. This, when the smallness of the sum to be levied upon them was considered, would prove but a very slight check upon their commercial schemes.

It was strongly affirmed, the hardship they so bitterly complained of, that of being taxed without their consent, for purposes about which they were not consulted, was groundless and nugatory. The money demanded of them, was for their immediate service; no intention ever was furnished, to appropriate it to any other purpose: it was required of them merely as their contingent for the general exigencies of the empire; of which the surest knowledge, and consequently the most skilful repartition must always rest with Great Britain, as the supreme seat of political direction, and the main spring of every motion where the universal interest of the whole was concerned.

The various emigrations from the British islands were not, it was suggested, made with a view in the emigrators, to sever themselves from the sovereignty of Britain: they went forth merely to better their circumstances under the guardianship, as  
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it were, of the mother-country : they had constantly an eye to her protective care : they relied upon it ; and it was under the imperial banner of Great Britain, one may truly say, that they made themselves respected, and became strong and flourishing.

Long usage, it was alledged, militated for the prerogative claimed by the British government. The Colonists, ever since their first foundation, had peaceably submitted to the jurisdiction of the ruling powers at home, throughout all the various changes and revolutions that had successively taken place in Britain, during the last and present century. In all cases of intricacy, where they could not obtain a permanent decision among themselves, and such as parties would sufficiently respect to admit as final, they constantly had recourse to the Privy Council in England, and abided by its determination without any further dispute ; notwithstanding it acted on these occasions entirely according to the spirit or letter of the English laws, as appeared most equitable ; and by no means in conformity to those that prevailed in the colonies.

This right of acting as umpire, was an incontestible proof that the Colonies had always considered this country as intrinsically possessed of an authority paramount, and superior to their own ; which was still more strongly exemplified by their punctually recurring to it in the frequent disputes about their respective boundaries, and in the many other differences that had, from time to time, arisen between the provinces from various causes, all which had been invariable submitted to the judgment of the parent state.

It was further argued that this practice of constantly appealing to the powers at home, constituted in itself an indisputable evidence both of the justice and propriety of acknowledging the supremacy



macy of Great Britain over the Colonies. It shewed that it never had been questioned, and what merited no less the attention of the Colonies, that it was absolutely requisite, for the preservation of tranquility and good order throughout the American settlements, where endless jars and confusions would necessarily ensue, without the interposition of a sovereign controul or to prevent to pacify them.

There was still another consideration, said they, of which the inhabitants in the colonies did not seem aware. The government over them was delegated; and the conduct of their governors and ruling men subject to revial and censure at home. This rendered the condition of individuals much more easy, from the consciousness of obtaining redress in case of ill usage, than if those who ruled over them were accountable to no superior tribunal. The weight of government was hereby diminished, in proportion as they who exercised it, were amenable to a still higher court.

Would the Americans, it was asked, relinquish the solid advantages they now enjoyed, for a meer appellation? the price of this would be much greater than they apprehended. Were they to disclaim the authority of the parent-state, and take, upon them the risk of standing on their own ground, at a distance from the shelter and assistance of Great Britain, they would soon experience an oppressive alteration at home, and a mortifying difference abroad.

Instead of that quiet and undisturbed enjoyment of the gains of their industry, which was now their peculiar lot, they would then be loaded with those manifold burthens which all states must submit to, that aspire at making a figure of importance and respectability. Impositions of every kind would follow such a measure. In lieu of that moderate income, which now sufficed for the purposes of a govern-



government of which the demands were but small, they would then have a rank and title to support, a national dignity to maintain, and a complication of interests to defend. All this would require large revenues, and would soon teach them the disparity between trade carried on without domestic incumbrances, and guarded in all parts of the world by a powerful protector, and a commerce liable to perpetual exactions on a variety of accounts, and whose profits must necessarily undergo immense subtractions for the current and indispensable service of the state. While their internal prosperity met with these unavoidable obstructions, they must not imagine that their affairs would flow in the same easy channel abroad as heretofore. They well knew that nations are, like individuals, treated with complaisance or with roughness, according to the means they possess of returning benefits, or of resenting injuries. The respect they now met with throughout the various quarters of the world where they carried on their trade, was in consequence of the respect which the power and influence of Great Britain commanded all over the globe. When once the nations are apprized of a separation between them, and that Great Britain no longer interests herself in their behalf, they will inquire into the nature of their establishment, and scrupulously measure the extent of their power, before they decide among themselves upon what footing to consider them.

Nor ought the Americans to flatter themselves, that this examination of their strength and condition would be slight and superficial: they, to whom such a task would be committed, must be careful for their own sakes to acquit themselves with diligence and exactness; and they would be furnished with sufficient means. The world is no longer in those unenlightened times, when from the general discussion of ignorance and barbarity, knowledge was difficult to



obtain. The speedy communication subsisting between all cultivated nations, soon renders them thoroughly known to each other, whenever it becomes requisite to make such investigations. Whatever lists the Americans may hold out for the inspection of foreigners, these will not be long in discovering, that with all their exaggerations, and notwithstanding the pains taken to represent them as a numerous people, in the immense tracts they occupy along a coast extending fifteen degrees of latitude from the north east to the south west, there does not exist above one million seven hundred thousand white inhabitants, even according to their own account, which is well known to be calculated to impress the world with a much greater opinion of their strength, than is justly founded.

According to the proportions established by political writers, three parts in four of this number consist of women and children; and of the remaining fourth, one half may reasonably be reputed, through age, infirmity, and the various accidents concomitant on nature, incapable of taking an active part in the defence of their country. Thus the men able to bear arms will amount to little more than two hundred and fourteen thousand.

To proceed with all imaginable impartiality, were it to be allowed that this number will suffice to guard their coasts, repel invasions, and supply the many other calls of civilized society, it is granting as much as can be expected; many will probably think more than ought to be done, considering the prodigious extent of that coast, the perpetual intersection of mighty rivers running, at short intervals from each other, and dividing the provinces in such a manner, as to render it easy for an enemy to cut off their mutual communication. Add to this the boundless regions lying behind them, and inhabited by a fierce and yet unsubdued foe; between whom  
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and them an everlasting enmity must subsist, whose inveteracy is animated by every motive that can actuate the heart of man, and fill it with irreconcilable, and at the same time with well-grounded hatred.

But supposing them well provided for home defence, in what manner will they, with so slender a population, be adequate to any considerable exertions abroad? Vessels may be easily equipped for the purposes of trade; but the manning of a fleet is a task of serious magnitude: none but opulent states, well stocked with riches and inhabitants, are equal to such an undertaking. Whatever the future destiny of the Colonies may be, their condition at present does not permit them to cherish any reasonable expectations of becoming, before a length of time, formidable at any distance from their own country.

The consequence will be, that the states of Europe standing in little awe of their displeasure, will not treat them with that complaisance, nor shew them that favour they will possibly require at their hands. They will seize those pretences to make them pay largely for commercial advantages, which are so readily found when easy to enforce; nor will they, at the same time, express much readiness in procuring them compensation for the injuries they may justly complain of.

The remoteness of their situation from this hemisphere, will always prevent that speedy communication with those powers in confederacy with them, which is so requisite, and often so critical in a political correspondence. Transactions may happen of which the quickest intelligence is absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of the ends proposed by a connection with them. Hence it will not arise from policy, so much as good fortune,



tune, that alliances with them may prove beneficial.

The truth is, that European politics are too far off for Americans to mix in them with any regularity of co-operation. Nature interposes with an immense ocean, and bids them, as it were, to rest contented with a commercial communication, without becoming parties in feuds, by which they have nothing to gain, and much to lose.

Is it not wiser, therefore, for the Colonies to remain in a gentle subjection to Great Britain, which, for its own sake, will never lay a heavy hand upon them, than to trust to the precarious friendship of other nations? These, without the same motives of condescendance to their disposition, will involve them in difficulties, in which they will leave them, on any prospect of conveniency to themselves, to combat and surmount without affording them any assistance; however absolutely requisite, or solemnly stipulated. Self-interest on those occasions will stifle all other considerations; and those ties of consanguinity and reciprocal affection that unite Great Britain to her colonies, not subsisting between these and their new allies, connections will be formed and dissolved betwixt people situated at such a distance, with equal inconsiderateness and facility.

The ill policy of casting off the connection with the parent state, appearing in so evident a light, it was to be hoped, for the happiness of the Colonies, that they would open their eyes to the dangers they would run by embracing so fatal a measure, which would certainly tend to throw them successively into the hands of powers not more inimical to Great Britain, than eager to make them subservient to their own selfish ends, and ready to sacrifice them the moment these were attained.

If it behoved the Colonies to attach themselves cordially to Great Britain, it was no less incumbent



on them to place that confidence in her wisdom which men should in prudence do in those they have chosen for their chiefs. Great Britain is, by her position, placed, as it were, on an eminence from whence she surveys every part of the British empire. She perceives objects at an immense distance, which the inferior station of her dependencies cannot discover : they must necessarily depend upon her vigilance for information ; and must, of course, be guided by her direction.

The fact is, that while the provincial assemblies acknowledge themselves subordinate to the British government, they must, in reason, trust to her management in all the great affairs of state. Unacquainted with the intrigues that agitate the Courts of Europe, and ignorant of the secret designs that are lurking in the cabinets of ministers, they are not competent to the business of obviating difficulties, and warding off dangers. This is the duty of sovereigns and their ministers : they alone have the means of penetrating into the recesses of politics, and of unravelling that clue of dark measures wherein the intentions of statesmen are hidden : sagacity alone is not sufficient to effect this ; other methods must be employed, such as apply to the passions of men, and such as princes and their delegates are most expert in using.

The proportional strength of every member of an empire, is only known to its head. Beyond the limits of its own jurisdiction, no colony was able to pronounce, with any certainty, on the real situation of any province in the empire. Every one reserved the documents that lead to this knowledge for the inspection of the ministry at home : this alone knew, exclusively, their respective circumstances, and could form a proper idea of the measures to be adopted for the relative benefit of them all.

This duty had hitherto been performed by Great Britain.



Britain with the universal approbation of the Colonies, and to the admiration of all Europe. Her judiciousness and foresight in the treatment of them were unexampled, and had raised them to a summit of felicity which no other colonies had ever attained.

Why, therefore, should the step she had recently taken, be reprobated with so much violence, before a fair trial had been given it? The wisdom of it might, upon experience, be found equal to any preceding regulations.

Until this unhappy day, the injunctions of Great Britain, though reaching to a multitude of cases, and comprehending every branch of commerce and administration, had been received with all deference and respect: no cavils nor questions had arisen concerning her right and authority to frame them. As emanating from the supreme seat of legislative power, they were duly submitted to; and no suspicions were harboured of their being fraught with an oppressive tendency.

Restrictions and confinements in every branch of trade, were necessary for the benefit of all traders in general: they were a partial evil, to which they all submitted for the universal good. In England, various limits are assigned to several branches: the conviction of their utility silences all complaint? and they are admitted by all parties, however they may appear repugnant to their immediate interest.

Conformably to this idea, which is founded on the strictest equity, the limitations that accompanied the American trade, by circumscribing it within certain bounds, gave it a body and strength which it would probably lose, were it suffered to range at large without any controul: such an indiscriminate license, instead of assisting the progress of trade, might create such a competition between the mother-country and its dependencies, as would  
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in time end, if not in the destruction, at least in the infeebling of the trade of both.

The proverb which teaches, that by grasping at too much, a man may lose what he already possesses was peculiarly applicable to the Americans. They enjoyed under the present system a multitude of advantages, which were daily encreasing. They had no reason to repine at the superiority of Great Britain; they had hitherto received no injury from it; they had, on the contrary, found it a necessary friend on very trying occasions. A striking proof that it was not a superiority of real and internal happiness, appeared in the comparative condition of the inhabitants of the mother country, and those of its colonies. Here no wretchedness was known; every man, in the emphatic phrase of scripture, lived under his figtree and his vine: hunger and nakedness kept at a distance, and no mendicants were seen throughout the land. But was it so in Britain? How happy, could the answer be made in the affirmative.

The superiority, therefore, so much boasted of in the parent state, was a superiority of strength and efforts to guard and defend all its dependencies. Great Britain had so thoroughly exerted itself in the discharge of this important duty, that she had thereby brought herself almost to the brink of ruin. True it was, that in the prosecution of it, she had raised herself to the highest pitch of glory; but in that all her colonies had a share: the lustre she had obtained, was powerfully reflected upon them; and they experienced both the honours and the benefits of being members of the British empire, while she alone paid the immense price of all this glory.

Such was the general tenor and purport of the numberless speeches and arguments used on this memorable occasion. Never was more eloquence displayed than by the speakers on each side of this important



tant question. It was considered respectively as the cause of America on the one hand, and of Great Britain on the other ; and was accordingly pleaded by both parties with a warmth and ability worthy of so great a subject.

The debates on this act lasted two months, when it was repealed, to the universal joy of the people of England.

But that party which had framed it in the preceding, and supported it in the present session, condemned this repeal as an instance of weakness in the ministry, and as a heartless submission to the pleasure of the colonies, whose pretensions would now increase, when they saw that a dread of their power, and a fear of disobliging them, began to operate in England.

The idea of their inability to pay the tax required, they represented as totally false and groundless. As a proof of the flourishingness of their circumstances, it was specified, that of the debt they had contracted during the late war, near eighteen hundred thousand pounds had been discharged in the course of only three years ; and that they had provided funds for the discharge of their remaining incumbrances of this nature, amounting to between seven and eight hundred thousand pounds, in the space of two years more.

This plainly shewed they were fully able to levy the sum exacted by the stamp act, which was, in truth, a very moderate imposition, and was not expected to exceed the sum of one hundred thousand pounds annually.

To these allegations it was replied, that notwithstanding these appearances, the Americans were already loaded as much as they could bear ; that the very discharging of the sums above mentioned, was a very heavy weight upon them, and should be considered as a just argument for not exacting more  
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at the present : that in the mean time the regulations made by the late ministry, were greatly felt, and operated in the nature of a large tax, though not formally laid upon them as such.

It was further asserted, that the representations brought up from all parts of the kingdom, were undeniable proofs of the detriment that had been already caused, and would continue to its manufactories, if that act remained in force. That it was more consistent, therefore, with policy and with humanity to repeal it, than to involve Great Britain in a quarrel for so insignificant a consideration as the eventual produce of a stamp act, and to suffer so many thousands of industrious and ingenious individuals to want subsistence.

In addition to these reasons, it was surmised that other substantial causes might be assigned for the readiness shewn to comply with the request of the Colonies. The House of Bourbon, though silent, was not inactive in strengthening the bonds of its reciprocal compact. The disgraces and humiliations that had been heaped upon her in the late war, could never be obliterated from her remembrance. There was no doubt that she would seize the first opportunity that offered, to take the most signal vengeance on the British nation; and who could tell whether she was not only watching how she might improve, but whether she had not secretly excited the present disturbances between Great Britain and her colonies.

To confirm these insinuations, the suspicious behaviour of the French was adduced, in withholding the payment of the Canada bills so faithfully promised at the conclusion of the peace, together with the affected delays of the Spanish Court in putting off the settlement of the Manilla ransom. Both these were objects wherein the national honour was essentially concerned : the conduct of those powers

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was inexcusable; and it was not probable they would venture to act in so slighting a manner, were they not convinced that difficulties would shortly arise, to prevent Great Britain from insisting upon their doing her complete justice.

As to the weakness and submission of the ministry to the Colonies, it was answered that a discovery of error should be followed by an immediate receding from it, without consulting the prejudices of false honour. Every step had been taken in order to arrive at the reality of the situation of America, and every man had been consulted whose knowledge and experience of that country intitled him to credit. After examinations and consultations upon the minutest circumstances relating to every British colony in America, the result had been, that the laying on the stamp act was a measure equally ill timed and ill advised. There were not at this present day sufficient means for the people there to comply with the terms specified by the act. Wealth they undoubtedly had; but it did not consist of gold and silver in the same proportion as they are found in other countries: to levy the payment of this tax in the manner proposed, would occasion more distress among them than was conceivable in England, where the plenty of the precious metals enabled every body to have some share of them.

There were also other material objections against the carrying of this act into execution. The people in the colonies thought themselves treated with great and unusual severity by the various ordinances relative to their trade, that had taken place previous to the stamp act. As they had been rigorously enforced, and were at the same time deemed highly injudicious and oppressive by the people of England as well as of America, these were the more deeply exasperated at them; and were not therefore in



in a disposition to receive fresh burdens with the same willingness they had formerly testified. To have recourse to compulsion would prove bad policy : it would indispose them still further, and be the means of still greater oppression than the former, without answering perhaps the intended end ; as in so extensive a country, where towns and habitations are often at a great distance, and the inhabitants thinly scattered, they would by various ways be able to elude the payment of the tax.

An imposition, therefore, that came accompanied with so many difficulties in the execution, and produced so much ill blood, did not deserve support. The sooner it was repealed, the sooner the mischiefs it had already produced, would be repaired and forgotten. It were imprudent in the extremest degree, to covet on the one hand a trifling revenue that must be extorted through violent methods, and to incur the risk on the other of losing an immense balance of profit, flowing with ease and regularity through long accustomed channels of trade, and which by the benefits accruing to the parties concerned, bound them to each other by the strong ties of interest, and cemented that natural friendship and mutual benevolence between the people of Great-Britain and America, which no motives whatever should, in sound policy, be permitted to interrupt.

The Americans had been accused of intemperate proceedings ; of having acted with an unbecoming degree of warmth, and treated with indecency the lawful commands and authority of the mother-country. This was a harsh accusation to be levelled indiscriminately upon a whole people collectively. True it was, that among the lower sort instances of heat and violence had happened, which could not be excused ; but they were not approved by the better. A mob is no where to be contained



within bounds. What tumults had lately been frequent in England, even in the metropolis, at the very doors of Parliament, in the presence of Majesty itself? Were the military to be let loose on this account; and was an undistinguished punishment to be inflicted on the innocent as well as the guilty? Such measures might be consistent with the principles of some of the despotic courts on the European continent, but were by no means admissible in a country of freedom, such as England; where, it was justly presumed, the majority of the natives felt for the Americans almost as much as for themselves, and would not see them delivered up to the discretion of the military, without espousing their cause, even if it were less defensible than it appeared at present.

On a cool review of what the Americans had done, it was no more than what the people of Great-Britain had set them frequent precedents of, on similar occasions. It proved, in fact, that they were endowed with the same disposition, and possessed of the same spirit. This certainly was in itself no misfortune nor blemish; it was a character the natives of this island gloried in; it was, in truth, the foundation of their liberty. To the effects arising from this cause, they were indebted for the excellent government of which they so justly boasted; to be desirous of repressing such a temper in their American brethren, was equally absurd and unjust. The Americans sprung from the same stock, and inherited all the qualities of their forefathers: it was no wonder, therefore, they should imitate them, and copy closely after their example; it ran, as it were, in their blood; and if it was a fault, it was common both to the European and American English. But it was no fault; or, at worst, a happy and glorious one; such as they might justly pride themselves in. To criminate the inhabitants of the British



tish Colonies for the consequences resulting from principles which were cherished and honoured in the mother country, was unworthy of the sentiments and feelings of men who adopted those principles in their fullest latitude, and among whom the consequences they naturally gave birth to, had made their appearance upon almost every occasion that had the least tendency to provoke them.

In private altercations, the party that manifested the greatest coolness, was, in the nature of things, always the surest of coming off with the the greatest advantage. In pursuance of this maxim, it behoved Great Britain, for her own sake, to avoid all precipitation in regard to her Colonies. Notwithstanding the ill-humour they had shown, Great Britain was, in fact, the aggressor, and had occasioned it by exercising her authority with too high a hand. The true method of keeping subjects in a disposition always to obey, was by relaxing the reins of government, whenever, through inadvertence, or any other cause, they had been drawn too tight. The chief fault of the rulers of nations, was their propensity to exert their power upon too many occasions. The art of governing happily, was not to govern too much ; and to leave mankind as much to their own liberty of conduct, as might be compatible with the general interest of the community. This rule had not been observed in respect of the Americans : too close and narrow an inspection had lately prevailed in all their concerns. It was this conduct that exasperated them ; it was this conduct, therefore, that required alteration on our part. As England had begun the difference, it became her to put an end to it, by a cessation of those demands upon America, which were so grievous and intolerable to her :—though she might be able to comply with them, yet as her compliance must either proceed from coercion, or, at best, be attended with universal mur-



mur and discontent, it equally became the natural generosity of the British nation, as well as the constitutional lenity of its government, to give way to the desires of the Americans, were even policy and interest not to dictate such a condescension.

But waving these motives, was it equitable to pretend to a more thorough knowledge of the condition America was in at present, than that of the wisest heads among them? From the examination of one of the most judicious men, and able politicians that, or any other country ever produced, it had appeared, that the tax in agitation was utterly impracticable; and if insisted upon, would prove the most ruinous measure ever pursued by England, with respect to her Colonies. The very attempt to establish it, had considerably alienated the respect and the attachment they had always professed for England, and all that belonged to it. Before that fatal measure had been adopted, the temper of America was so favourable to England, that the strongest predilection and partiality was entertained for whatever bore the name of English. Our manufactures, our fashions, our taste, were every where predominant; our ideas, customs, and manners, were adopted with a filial and implicit reverence; a native of Britain was treated with peculiar kindness, and even allowed a tacit preference to themselves, while his behaviour corresponded with his character in life.

But since the framing of that odious measure, this affection had been much impaired: the Americans began to consider the English in the light of a people, whom they had a right to suspect of arbitrary designs upon them; and could not therefore behave with the same cordiality to the individuals of that country as heretofore.

They had formerly considered the English Parliaments as the sure protectors of American liberty,



ty, and always spoke of that body with the profoundest veneration : they looked upon it as a shield of defence against the oppression of wicked ministers, and confidently relied on its assistance in the redress of any grievance they might complain of.

But this confidence and respect was much diminished by the different treatment they had lately experienced. Instead of the mildness and complaisance that assembly was wont to express towards America, the affairs of that country were now, it seems, no longer a favourable object ; and its prosperity was viewed rather with an unfriendly and jealous eye.

They once were free to lay their representations before Parliament, with a full security they would be duly attended to ; but times were now so unhappily changed, that when they applied, with all reverence and humility for its interposition in their behalf, Parliament refused even to receive their petitions.

In consequence of this severity of conduct, the resentment of the Americans was such, that it was vain to expect a return of good will, or of commercial intercourse, without a repeal of the act in question. This was the purport of the petitions addressed to Parliament ; and unless they met with acceptance and success, that resentment would never subside, and its effects would continue in spite of all endeavours to prevent them.

Whatever might be the opinion of the abettors of the late ministerial measures, America stood in no absolute need of British manufactures. Those that are the most useful and necessary, such as cloths and woollens, iron and steel ware, and other articles of equal utility and importance, they had already begun to manufacture with success, and would, in a short time, arrive at no small degree of perfection in those branches of workmanship.



In those arts that contribute to conveniency or elegance, they had not made so much progress; but the people of America were very far from deficient either in point of industry or ingenuity; and had already produced such specimens of both, as rendered it evident, that with encouragement, they would speedily attain to a considerable degree of expertness.

But however inelegant and coarse the productions of the American artists might be, the people of England would, as actual experience had already taught them, find that no allurements of superior finery, or even of cheapness, would carry off their manufactures in the American markets, or even suffer them to be admitted there.

The merchants in America, though a numerous body of men, were comparatively a handful to the vast aggregate of the various other parts of the community. These were chiefly composed of farmers and cultivators of land: men wholly taken up in rural occupations; in clearing the ground, and improving the soil, or in rearing flocks and cattle. These were a race of men little acquainted with any wants which they were not able to supply of themselves. They lived in primitive simplicity: what they wore was chiefly wrought within their own doors: they stood in no need of shops or warehouses for the purposes of luxury. These were not a people whom the deprivation of British goods could affect.

If, through a continuation of the system taken up in England, the Americans should on their side persist in a refusal of English importations, they were not in the least apprehensive of distress for their husbandmen and planters. Instead of felling timber and sowing of grain for exportation, they would, on the failing of these resources, betake themselves to other means of subsisting: they would  
leave



leave their fields and forests ; and, instead of ploughmen, would become artificers.

Nor let the enemies to America imagine that materials would be deficient. The wool of their flocks could, in the space of two or three years, with proper management, furnish a sufficient quantity for the demands of all America. The quality, though somewhat inferior to that of England, was of remarkable fineness. Flax they abounded in : immense quantities of flax-seed were annually exported to Ireland from Philadelphia and New York.

Iron they were provided with in equal plenty ; and had among them numbers of workmen perfectly conversant in the manner of working it to the best advantage. Thus they were prepared to face every difficulty that might arise from the interruption of commercial supplies from Great Britain. If this interruption should continue any time, they might become such proficient in trades and handicrafts of all kinds, as not only to raise a sufficiency of necessaries for their consumption at home, but even to produce a stock adequate to the demands of the French and English West Indies, and of Spanish America ; with whom their nearer proximity would enable them to carry on such a trade, on much more advantageous terms to both parties, than the distance of Britain could afford.

All these were matters of serious consideration to the people of England, and should induce them to put a stop to the pernicious schemes that were going forwards, before their evil consequences arose to a degree beyond remedy.

There was another ground of complaint among the Americans. They were misrepresented in a manner equally injurious and indecent. They were described as void of loyalty and gratitude ; as earnestly solicitous to profit all they could by the



generosity of the mother country, and yet unwilling to bestow their due share of co-operation. But did facts in any wise countenance so grievous an accusation? Did not America, in the course of the preceding war, raise an army of twenty-five thousand men, and maintain them at its own expence? The troops sent from Great-Britain did not amount to a larger number. In the war antecedent to that, they supplied the British expeditions against Spanish America with several thousands of their best men, and exerted themselves with equal bravery and success against the French in North America. The recapitulation of such facts was not made by way of reproach, but proceeded from the necessity of rendering the English duly sensible of their mistake, in taxing America with a defect of good-will.

The last war, it was said, was undertaken purely on account of America. But how distant from truth was this assertion! It arose from a contest about the limits of Canada and Nova Scotia. This contest was heightened by the incroachments of the French upon the right of the English to trade in the country on the Ohio. This trade was carried on with British manufactures, by factors, whose correspondents resided in England. Thus it was undertaken for the defence of the British mercantile interest, in the inland parts of America, where the commercial intercourse with the native Indians depends chiefly on the goods remitted from England.

It was not hereby intended to insinuate, that America did not look upon herself as bound to espouse the quarrels of Britain: on the contrary, she was proud of being considered as a faithful partner of Britain, in all her enterprizes; as a partaker of her dangers, as well as of her successes; and was no less



less interested in all that befel her, than she could possibly be herself.

Were a war to break out in Europe from causes wherein America had no particular concern, still the Colonies would zealously take up arms, and furnish their pecuniary contingent, on a requisition from Great-Britain. This was no more than they had always done. They were ready to do it again, and to manifest the sincerest attachment, by every kind of poof that lay in their power, while the parent state called upon them for that purpose in a constitutional manner, as had always been practised heretofore.

Such was the purport of the sentiments and opinions of the celebrated Doctor Franklin, upon his examination before the House of Commons.— They contained altogether, a body of information worthy of that assembly's notice, and were productive of a friendly disposition towards America, that contributed not a little to the repeal of the act so obnoxious to that people.

But the two chief supporters of their cause were Lord Camden in the House of Peers, and Lord Chatham (then Mr. Pitt) in the House of Commons. The first had been lately raised to the Peerage with the universal applause of the nation, of which he had acquired the highest esteem and respect, by his conduct while at the head of one of the most important departments of the law. His arguments were decisively in favour of the Americans, and carried with them a weight and respectability that rendered them effectually serviceable in their cause.

The House of Commons had long been witness of the talents for oratory possessed by Mr. Pitt; but he displayed them on this occasion in a manner that will never be forgotten by those who were witnesses of his exertions on that memorable day. He spoke  
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with that boldness of thought, that originality of expression, and that impetuosity of eloquence, which characterised him in so singular a manner, and which so few were able, or dared to encounter.—Such was the impression he made upon his auditors, and the public at large, that the repeal of the stamp-act was determined, and a majority of the nation concurred in approving this determination.

This famous bill was strongly opposed, however, in the Upper House; and on its passing, no less than thirty-three Lords entered a protest against it, couched in strong terms, and supported by forcible arguments.

Here the dispute between Great Britain and its Colonies seemed to promise an entire cessation. Their desires had been complied with in the most ample manner; and nothing had been omitted to testify the sincerity with which the parent state wished to live on the most friendly terms with its American dependencies.

But the judgment of those who had predicted, that the concessions of Great Britain to America, instead of laying that turbulent spirit which had lately broke out among them, would, on the contrary, increase it, began to be verified in many instances.

Those who, during the late troubles, had shown themselves friends to the British government, were become objects of general dislike. While in England the heats occasioned by the difference of opinion concerning the stamp-act, were gradually subsiding, in America they seemed to have laid the foundation of an irreconcilable hatred to such as had not sided with the popular party. A faction now evidently appeared to be formed, resolutely bent to seize every occasion of diminishing the power and influence of the mother country. It was the more  
danger-



dangerous, as it acted with apparent respect and attachment to Great-Britain, though it consisted at the same time of her well-known enemies; men, unhappily for her, whose abilities went hand in hand with their enmity.



## C H A P. III.

*Continuance of the Dissentions in America.*

THE inhabitants of the immense dominions possessed by Great-Britain in America, though the subjects of one power, and generally originating from the British islands, were, notwithstanding, very different from each other in their character, disposition, ideas, customs, manners, religious, and political notions.

The people dwelling in the four provinces of the country called New England, are the descendants of those determined republicans, who, as already observed, fled from England, in order to enjoy their own notions of government and religion, unmolested by the hand of power.— They retained the hatred of their forefathers to kingly authority, and were always eager and violent in their opposition to it, on the least suspicion of its harbouring designs to exceed its limits.

One may, without offering violence to truth, consider them as the life and soul of that opposition to Great-Britain, which has terminated in its loss of the extensive empire of North America.

The Colony of New York, together with that of Jersey, is chiefly inhabited by the posterity of the first founders of that settlement, who were Dutch, and who have left the general outlines of their character to the people of that province, industry, frugality, and an assiduous perseverance in the means of thriving.

Pennsylvania contains a still greater mixture than the two former. Two-thirds of the inhabitants consist of Germans, Dutch, and other foreigners, of several denominations; a hardy and laborious race, who



who driven partly by poverty, and partly by persecution, to this friendly retreat from both, have by patience and toil, rendered that large country one of the most fertile and plentiful in the new world.

A numerous proportion of that peaceable and inoffensive sect, the Quakers, possesses a considerable share of Pennsylvania; of which the illustrious Penn was the original founder and proprietor.

In both Carolinas, multitudes are of foreign extraction, and retain the respective temper and disposition of their progenitors.

In Virginia and Maryland, the primitive adventurers were persons, in general, of a respectable character; possessed of property, and irreproachable in their morals, of a loyal turn, and firmly attached to the mother country.

But in process of time, this happy frame of mind has undergone a great change, owing to causes easily traced by reflecting men. For many years these two provinces have been, as it were, the sink, wherein England has poured all the vice and iniquity of which the laws could rid this island. Felons of all denominations, convicts exempted from the severity of justice, individuals of infamous character, profligates in short of both sexes, and of every complexion, have been sent in shoals to people these two Colonies.

The consequences have proved, as it was foreseen, by all persons of discernment, highly injurious to the reputation of both these provinces. They abound in men of a licentious spirit, averse to legal controul, and of an audaciousness that is not to be flattered by the deference and awe that are due to civil authority.

It was first in Virginia the standard of defiance to Great Britain was hoisted, as it were, in due form by the taking of those resolutions in the general assembly, that have already been mentioned. This

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was a decisive measure, and emboldened all the Colonies to come into public resolves of the like nature.

Such being the temper and disposition of the Colonists in general, it was not surprizing that they should be keen and eager in the discovery and pursuit of whatever appeared to be their immediate interest, and jealous of what might thwart it. To this it was owing, that notwithstanding the repeal of the stamp act, as the other regulations previous to it had not also been repealed, they continued in a discontented mood; which, though repress'd for a while from a sense of the condescension shewn them in that particular instance, soon broke out in a manner that convinced thinking people it would finally be attended with the most fatal consequences.

When the stamp act was repealed, the ministry who took that step, conscious that they were, in fact, stooping to the Americans, thought themselves obliged, at the same time, to pass a bill declaratory of the supreme sovereignty of Great Britain over all her Colonies, and of her competency and right to make laws and statutes to bind them in all cases whatever.

By the same declaration they annulled all the resolves and proceedings of the Provincial Assemblies that tended to claim any authority in their respective districts independent of that of Great Britain, especially the sole and exclusive privilege of imposing taxes and levying money.

This declaratory act, though considered at home as necessary to maintain the dignity of the British government in the midst of so much concession, was beheld by the Americans in quite another light. It was deemed a reservation of claims and pretences, to be brought forth and enforced whenever a favourable season occurred. This greatly diminished, in the ideas of the Americans, the complaisance



plaisance of England. She appeared rather to temporise, than to yield, with a good grace, to the desires they had so earnestly expressed.

The little impression made in America by the lenity of Great Britain, was manifested on the very first occasion that presented itself; an act had been passed by the administration, to which they were so much obliged, providing the troops cantoned throughout the Colonies, with such necessaries in their quarters, as were indispensable for their comfortable subsistence. In direct violation of this act, the assembly of New York passed another act, whereby the mode of executing the former was altered, and one of their own framing substituted in its room.

When the news of this refractoriness and disrespect, was brought to England, it excited no less indignation than surprise, it was evidently calculated to show that Great Britain had no condescendence to expect on the part of its colonies, either in matters of greater or lesser consequence, the present object was of the latter kind; yet such was the ill humour prevalent among them, as to cavil about a compliance founded upon the most obvious necessity.

In the heat of resentment for such undutiful behaviour, severe measures were at first proposed in Parliament, but upon weighing the matter deliberately, the moderation that characterises the English Government, dictated more conciliatory methods of proceeding. In order to support the dignity and supremacy of the British legislature, without proceeding to extremities, and yet to make the Colonies sensible of its determination, not to recede from its just rights, a bill was brought in, by which it was enacted, that the legislative power of the general assembly of New York, should be totally suspended, until it fully complied with all the terms of the act in question.

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At Boston the same refractory disposition equally prevailed. Notwithstanding the equitableness of granting due compensations to such as had suffered from the licentiousness of the mob, during the riots on account of the stamp act, it was not without difficulty the general assembly was induced to acquit themselves of their duty.

All these proofs of an unruly disobedient temper, roused at last the spirit of the people in power at home; they began to think it was necessary by some vigorous assertions of the rights of Great Britain, to convince the Colonies that it had by no means given up those claims of paramount authority, which it had exercised without opposition during such a number of years.

In pursuance of this idea, the Parliament passed an act, imposing duties on tea, paper, painters, colours, and glass, imported into the British plantations in America.

This act was received in the Colonies with no less, if not more disapprobation than that which imposed the stamps. The populace renewed its abusive behaviour, and the better sort immediately agreed to give it the most open and determined opposition.

To this purpose, meetings were held in all the principal towns; wherein it was resolved, to bestow exclusive encouragements on the manufactures carried on in America, and to lessen the importation and use of foreign commodities, a particular enumeration of these was made, which was chiefly levelled at the articles that came from England.

In the mean time, a circular letter was sent to every Colony by the Assembly of Massachusetts, which openly took the lead in this recommencement of a regular opposition to Great Britain, inviting them to join in a communication and harmony of sentiments, expressing their dissatisfaction at the

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the conduct of the British ministry, and asserting in the strongest terms the injustice and impropriety of its present treatment of the Colonies.

During the course of these unhappy altercations between Great Britain and America in 1768, one of the most unfortunate circumstances attending it, was the enmity subsisting between the provincial Assembly of Massachusetts and its Governor. He was unquestionably a man of abilities; but was considered as a secret foe to the cause of America, and as a sworn champion of the royal prerogative. In this light he met with a constant series of obstructions in whatever he undertook. Bickerings and disputes followed each other uninterruptedly, and he had all the violence of a party to contend with, that was animated with as much inveteracy against his person, as with hatred to the measures he supported.

The contest was of course carried on with an eye to both these objects: personal rancour was evidently at the bottom of many, if not most, of those perpetual representations and remonstrances with which they never lost the opportunity of assailing him. Neither can it be denied that feeling the stings of their animosity, he often retorted it, and treated them with an asperity corresponding to their own.

The consequences of this dissention were fatal to the parties chiefly interested in the great questions then in agitation. Great Britain and America owed many of the altercations that arose, and much of the antipathy subsisting between them, to the mutual ill-will of the Governor and the House of Representatives.

The new acts of the British legislature renewed and afforded fresh materials for the ill-humour of both. All bounds of moderation were now forgotten in the violence with which the Assembly thwarted



him. As the obstinacy of the Colonies had highly exasperated the British administration, the Governor was ordered to act with vigour and resolution, and by no means to show any disposition to yield to them as formerly.

As the circular letter from the Assembly of Massachusetts had given particular offence, and was viewed as an intention to raise an universal conspiracy throughout the Colonies against Great Britain, he was instructed to require, in the most positive and peremptory terms, that they should rescind the resolution which had produced that letter, and declare their disapprobation of that step as proceeding from temerity and precipitation.

Previous to this requisition, he had communicated to the Assembly, a letter written to him from Lord Shelburne, then Secretary of State, and which contained several expressions that showed how disagreeable and offensive their conduct appeared to the British ministry.

The Assembly was highly exasperated at the contents of this letter; and accused him of having misrepresented them at home in his official dispatches, copies of which they insisted he should produce, if he meant to clear himself of the imputation they charged him with; otherwise they should consider him in the odious light of a secret calumniator.

On his refusal of these copies, they wrote letters to the ministers in England, wherein they exculpated themselves from the charges of the Governor, and represented him as guilty of misrepresentation and partiality. They accompanied these complaints with warm remonstrances against the late acts of Parliament, as unconstitutional, and subversive of the rights of British subjects.

Despairing of being able to pacify men whose violence seemed at the present moment incapable of



of management, he thought it prudent to adjourn the Assembly, that they might have leisure to cool and ponder with some degree of temper on the steps they intended to take in the business that was shortly to become the subject of their deliberations.

In the speech accompanying this prorogation, he gave a full vent to his displeasure at the behaviour of the leading members of the Assembly, whose ambitious and popular views he reprobated with great freedom, and whom he described as much more actuated by faction, than by any real concern for the public.

In the mean time, to counterbalance the circular letter addressed by the province of Massachusetts to the other Colonies, another circular letter was written to every Provincial Governor in America, by Lord Hillsborough, lately preferred to the new appointment of Secretary of State for the American department.

This letter was intended as a refutation of the other, which it represented as calculated to mislead the public, and fill it with groundless jealousies and suspicions of the designs of Great Britain, as tending to inflame the minds of men with unjust resentments, and to excite them to unite in opposition to the lawful authority of the parent state.

Such was the situation of affairs, when Governor Bernard made the requisition above mentioned.

Some people are of opinion, that had there remained the least inclination to meet the wishes of the ministry so as to put an end to the altercation between Britain and her Colonies, a medium on this occasion might have been found by the Assembly of Massachusetts, to reconcile their own rights and importance with the supremacy and dignity of the British Parliament. Concessions might have been made, which would have saved the honour of



Britain, without derogating from the freedom of the Colonists.

But this opportunity of reconciliation was rejected with more unanimity than was expected. When the question to rescind the resolutions of the former house was put, it passed in the negative by a division of ninety two to seventeen.

It has been surmised, that this refusal was in a great measure occasioned by their being made acquainted with the consequences that must follow it. They were told that in case they did not comply, they were immediately to be dissolved. Upon this information, after consulting together the space of a week, they desired a recess might be granted them, in order to advise with their constituents. The denial of this exasperated them, and they forthwith came to the above determination.

They concluded by writing a letter to Lord Hillsborough, to justify their proceedings, and by sending to the Governor a message of the same tendency. They delivered themselves in both with the utmost freedom of thought and expression. They insisted upon the propriety of the circular letter; that they had a right to communicate their sentiments to their fellow subjects upon matters in which they were all jointly concerned; that it was the undoubted privilege of the Colonies to unite in a petition to the throne for the redress of their grievances. They reprobated, with great warmth, the requisition to rescind the resolutions of the former house; calling it unconstitutional and unprecedented: they complained of the epithets bestowed on their conduct through the suggestions of their secret enemies; and that while they were doing nothing but what was perfectly justifiable, they should be accused of harbouring seditious designs. They did not fail, at the same time, to remonstrate against  
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the late acts, as subversive of the principles of liberty, and as highly oppressive to America.

But they did not stop here. Inflamed with resentment against the Governor, whom they considered as their capital enemy, and the prime cause of the displeasure expressed against them, they drew up a list of charges of which they represented him guilty with much heat and acrimony, declaring him unfit to continue in the station he was invested with, and petitioning for his immediate removal.

The behaviour of the Assembly of Massachusetts was like a signal and example to the other Assemblies of the American continent. They treated the circular letters, written to each of them by the Secretary in the American department, precisely in the same manner. They unanimously voted addresses to that Assembly, expressive of their approbation and concurrence in all its measures. They wrote to the American Secretary in the same style; approving and justifying, in the most forcible terms, the conduct of the Assembly at Boston, and condemning the purport of his own letter with the most explicit freedom.

To show, at the same time, that they did not mean their dissatisfaction should evaporate in meer complaints, they renewed their former combinations against the use and importation of English goods, and agreed to vend or purchase none that should arrive, after such as had been ordered previously to the expiration of the present year. From this agreement articles only of indispensable necessity were excepted; and it was to hold good till the late acts were entirely repealed.

The dissolution of the Assembly of Massachusetts had been preceded, a few days before, by a great tumult at Boston. A vessel belonging to one of the principal merchants there, was seized by order of the Board of Customs, in consequence of having



neglected to comply with the regulations in force. She was conveyed, for security, under the protection of a man of war, then lying in the harbour. Hereupon the populace assembled, and treated the Commissioners of the Customs very outrageously, breaking the windows of their houses, and burning the Collectors boats.

Dreading further ill usage, the officers of the Customs judged it necessary to take shelter in castle William, situated at the entrance of the harbour, where they resumed the functions of their office.

In the mean time, the people of Boston held frequent meetings, the issue of which was a remonstrance to the Governor, asserting, as usual, rights and pretensions contradictory to the authority of the British legislature. Among other requests, they made one of a very singular and unprecedented nature, which was, that he would take upon him to order the King's ships out of the harbour.

The licentiousness of the people became daily more outrageous and ungovernable. It resembled, in many instances, the spirit of violence exerted by the republican party, during the tumultuous æra of the civil wars in England in the last century.

Inflamed by the machinations of those among them who had secret ends to accomplish, the commonalty began to throw off all decency and reserve, both in their words and actions. They spoke with the highest irreverence of the greatest personages in Britain, and their publications teemed with passages destructive of all subordination to its sovereignty over them. They seemed, in short, to have thrown aside all respect for their mother country, and to have transferred their regard and obedience to their own assemblies exclusively. These they dignified, occasionally, with the title of Parliament; and considered them as lawfully invested with sufficient rights and powers to govern  
them



them independently of any other interference whatsoever.

In the midst of these disorders, news arrived from England, that the solemn petition they had transmitted thither, to be laid before the King, had not been presented to him. The Colony Agent had not been suffered to deliver it; objections being made that he was not duly authorised for that purpose, having been only appointed by the Assembly, without the Governor's concurrence.— This report contributed not a little to excite universal murmurs, and to add to the ill-blood and seditious disposition already prevailing among all classes.

Government bethought itself, at length, of making the Colonies sensible, that it would not submit any longer to be braved and insulted in the execution of its authority. To this intent troops were ordered to repair to Boston, in sufficient numbers to intimidate the refractory, and to support the well-affected.

On receiving this intelligence, the town of Boston expressed the utmost surprize and alarm. Now it was, said they, that the real designs of Britain began to manifest themselves. Their liberties were now to be trampled upon by an unmerciful and barbarous soldiery; and themselves devoted to destruction, in case of resistance.

They assembled in the town-hall, and drew up a petition to the Governor, intreating him to call a General Assembly, that the province might instantly resolve what measures were proper to be adopted in such critical circumstances, for the peace and safety of the country, and to prevent those heart-burnings and insurrections, that might probably be occasioned by the rumours of a military force approaching to overawe the inhabitants, and



compel their obedience to laws to which they were averse.

But they were disappointed in their demands: the Governor gave them to understand, that it was no longer in his power to convene a Provincial Assembly, until he had received the King's consent; the purport of his last instructions being, that he should wait for orders from England, where the matter was then under consideration.

Upon this refusal of the Governor, they determined to call an Assembly themselves, under the name of a Convention. Preparatory to this purpose, a committee was appointed by the town-meeting, to take into special consideration the present state of the province. This committee began by a long enumeration of their rights, and of their various infractions. They resolved, that the introduction of an armed force among them, in opposition to their consent, was contrary to law. This resolution, they asserted, was strictly conformable to the spirit of the English constitution, which forbids the keeping up of an army, without the consent of Parliament. They appealed to the same spirit for the propriety of holding frequent Parliaments; and, in consequence, resolved that a Convention should be summoned, in the same manner as the General Assembly.

But the most remarkable measure adopted by this meeting, was a requisition to the inhabitants to put themselves in a posture of defence against any sudden attack of an enemy. This requisition they founded on a late apprehension, as they stated it, prevailing among many, of an approaching rupture with France.

This was certainly the boldest step that had ever yet been taken in the Colonies. The intention of it was obvious to the world, as well as to themselves; and it was easy to perceive what were the final aims of those



those who had given birth to, and fomented with so much pains, the distractions and disturbances throughout the Colonies.

The select-men of the town of Boston were directed to write circular letters to all the other towns in the Colony, acquainting them with the resolutions that had been taken, and exhorting them with the utmost earnestness to concur with firmness and speed in the decisions made by the meeting.

Such was the unanimity of opposition to Great Britain throughout this populous province, that out of ninety-seven towns, of which it consisted, one only refused its concurrence. This was the town of Hatfield; the inhabitants of which had the courage to dissent from the sentiments of their countrymen, and openly to signify their disapprobation of their proceedings.

Their answer to the circular letter inviting them to unite with the rest, was conceived in terms, which for the judiciousness and spirit of the arguments they conveyed, were justly esteemed at the time, a composition highly honourable to those who framed it. It fully justified the moderation it recommended, and represented in their truest colours, the seditiousness and infatuation of thus bidding open defiance to Great Britain, and of flying to arms without necessity; which could only tend to accelerate mischiefs and miseries, which coolness and temperance of behaviour would be most efficacious to prevent.

The conduct of the inhabitants of Hatfield made no other impression on their countrymen than to excite their contempt of it, and their suspicion that it was influenced by motives of pusillanimity, or interestedness; an accusation which they were always ready to fix on all who deviated from those violent methods of acting which they had so long adopted,  
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and looked upon as the only means that were proper to be employed in the present exigencies.

As soon as the Convention was met, it sent a deputation to the Governor, to assure him that their intentions were intirely pacific; that they did not consider themselves as any ways invested with powers of government; that their sole aim was to deliberate together, in a friendly manner, what measures would prove most conducive to preserve public tranquility, in the present critical situation of their affairs.

They did not forget, however, to complain of grievances, and of the imputation of disloyalty under which they unjustly laboured in England; earnestly desiring that he would consent to the meeting of a General Assembly, as the surest and most constitutional remedy they could have recourse to, in their present distress.

But the Governor remained inflexible in his denial of their request; advising them seriously to reflect on the dangers they were exposing themselves to, by continuing assembled in defiance of law.—He exhorted them to desist from so unwarrantable a conduct, and quietly to separate, before he found himself obliged, as the Representative of the Crown, to assert its prerogatives in a more decisive manner. He told them they might rest assured, that Great Britain was determined to maintain her sovereignty unimpaired, and would find means to insure obedience.

In answer to the Governor's admonitions, they replied, that the Convention could only be viewed as a private assembly of persons, met to confer amicably on their concerns. In that light, which was the only one they claimed, no criminality or refractoriness could be imputed to them.

To this second message the Governor would give no audience; alledging, that to grant them any  
hearing,



hearing, would be admitting them to be legally assembled, and might tend to confer a weight and importance on them, which he wholly disavowed.

The Governor's firmness disconcerted them :— They contented themselves with drawing up a report of their proceedings ; which, contrary to the stile they had used hitherto, was conceived in terms of remarkable moderation. After mentioning the motives of their meeting, and disclaiming all public authority, they recommended intire deference and submission to government, and a respectful dependence on the wisdom and equity of the king and his ministers, for a just and timely redress of their grievances.

They added strong protestations of their readiness to assist in their several capacities, in the maintenance of good order, and to co-operate with the civil government in the suppression of all irregularities.

They concluded by a circumstantial representation of their own conduct on the present occasion, and of every transaction which related to it. This was done by way of apology, and to obviate or diminish the sinister impressions which the violence of their late proceedings might have occasioned. It was transmitted to their agent in London, who was carefully instructed to make the best use of it for that purpose.

The day whereon the Convention broke up, was marked by the arrival of several transports with troops, under the convoy of some ships of war. There were difficulties at first about quartering them. As castle William was sufficiently roomy to accommodate them, objections were started to their admission into the town, where no barracks had been prepared for their reception. But this difficulty was luckily removed by fitting up some houses that were to be reputed barracks, and in which they were to be  
admitted



admitted on that footing, in order to obviate any precedent of their being quartered in private houses. On these conditions they came on shore, and were allowed the provisions usual to be furnished by the Colony in such places.

This arrival of a military force seemed to have thrown a damp on the spirit of turbulence that had reigned so long uncontrouled. As it was now imagined, that having once begun, Great Britain would continue to act with vigour, those who before had been the open promoters of opposition, began to think it necessary to proceed with caution, and to assume an appearance of moderation.

But the tranquility effected by this measure was unhappily of no long duration. A concatenation of untoward causes, produced a series of incidents that soon put an end to the expectations that had been formed of seeing a cessation of this unhappy contest.

The late conduct of the Province of Massachusetts had given great offence in England. It was represented in Parliament, as an atrocious violation of the dignity of the British legislature, and as an explicit denial of its authority. The public was anxious, in the mean time, to see a period of these disputes, convinced that they would, if not soon terminated, occasion mischiefs of a very serious nature.

The two parties that divided the British nation on this subject, subsisted still in their full force.—Those who had at the commencement of the dispute recommended coercive measures, adhered to their former opinion with unabated warmth; and such as preferred lenity and condescendence, were no less strenuous in maintaining the justness of their sentiments.

In this perpetual conflict of ideas, the people at large engaged, as before, with equal earnestness.—

Thus



Thus the altercation continued in Britain, as well as in America, with as little signs of coming speedily to any conclusion. It was this circumstance, principally, that kept up the spirit of dissention in America. Had the British nation been first and last of one mind on this matter, Lord Chatham's assertion in the House of Commons would have been verified, and the resistance of America would only have provoked her destruction. But the clashing of private interests in Britain, gave a strength to the pretensions, and an importance to the transactions in the Colonies, that perplexed the councils of the nation, and rendered them fluctuating and indecisive.

As the opposition in America was attended, on the contrary, with unanimity, and conducted by persons of great abilities, it was not surprising that they should make the most of the divisions prevailing among the ruling people in Britain, and take all those advantages that necessarily accrue to an enemy from the disunion of his antagonists.

Such has constantly been the persuasion of the judicious and discerning, ever since the commencement of this contest.

Thus, notwithstanding the resolutions taken from time to time by the British ministry, to force the Americans to obedience, as the Colonies were well acquainted with the instability of people in power, they cherished no groundless hope, that in the frequent changes of the ministry, one might at last arise favourable to their pretensions, and inclined, for the sake of tranquility, to make the concessions they demanded.

In this expectation, it was not surprising they should continue to harass every administration that proved hostile to their demands. They had done it hitherto with success, and doubted not, through perseverance, to gain the point they proposed.

Such



Such was the respective situation of Great Britain and America, at the opening of the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine; when a new system appeared to have been formed in regard to America, and a determination taken to change the lenity and forbearance hitherto exercised, into severity and compulsion.

In pursuance of this determination, an address was presented to the King by both Houses, wherein they passed the severest censures on the behaviour of the Assembly of Massachusetts; the various resolutions it had passed derogatory to the claims of the British legislature were declared to be null and void. The circular letter it had written to the other Colonies, inviting them to join in a common petition against those claims, was condemned as illegal, unconstitutional, and unwarrantable in a people who acknowledged themselves subject to the Crown of Great Britain. It was no less reprobated as injurious to the British nation, and evidently calculated to spread discontent and create factions inimical to the parent state, and directly subversive of its sovereignty over the Colonies.

The town of Boston in particular, by this address, was represented as the seat of incessant confusion. Riots and disturbances daily succeeded to each other; and the inhabitants were become so unruly and tumultuous, that no respect was paid to civil government. The officers appointed by the Crown in the various departments of public service, did not any longer dare to attempt the execution of their duty. The magistrates, instead of exerting themselves for the restoration of good order, remained passive spectators of these tumultuous proceedings. It was time, therefore, for the executive power to interpose, in order to effect that by force, which could not be compassed by lenity.

It



It was declared in this address, that the proceedings of the people in their town meetings were unlawful and seditious; that their appointment of a Provincial Convention, and their letters to the several towns, requesting them to elect deputies to that intent, were destructive of all government, and tended to establish an authority independent of the Crown. The meeting of the Convention itself, was a daring usurpation of power, and a manifest defiance of the British legislature.

This address expressed, at the same time, a full concurrence in the measures that had been taken to reduce that town and province to the obedience due to Great Britain. It promised a firm support of all the measures necessary for that end; and concluded by advising that an exemplary punishment should be inflicted on the authors of the late disorders. In order to do this the more speedily and effectually, it was proposed that Governor Bernard might be instructed to transmit the fullest information he could procure, of all treasonable acts committed in the Colony of Massachusetts within the foregoing year, specifying the persons most active in their perpetration, that a commission might issue from the Crown, to inquire into, and determine upon the guilt of the respective offenders, within the limits of this realm, in conformity to a statute made in the reign of Henry the Eighth, should sufficient ground appear to warrant such a method of proceeding.

Notwithstanding this address was voted by a great majority, yet it was strongly opposed; and a multitude of arguments were adduced, to show the danger, as well as the impropriety of using coercive methods in America. It was alledged that Great Britain having, by the repeal of the stamp act, renounced all ideas of compulsion, it ought, consistently with its honour and justice, to have persisted in that plan, which, at all events, was the safest.

The



The Colonists had been taught to believe, that the policy of Great Britain would henceforward induce her to secure the loyalty of the Colonies through acts of beneficence, and carefully to abstain from laying such impositions upon them as did not accord with the system they had formed upon the subject of taxation. It was not surprizing, therefore, that finding themselves deceived, they should feel and express a resentment which had certainly some foundation.

Incouraged by the irresolution of our politics, and the inconsistency of our councils, they had been guilty of irregularities which were not to be excused. But they who accused them of rebellion, should consider, that when people are led into errors and misbehaviour through the fault of others, these are principally answerable for the mischiefs that are committed.

The temper of the Americans had been tried:—Experience had shown, that in some cases they were obstinately determined to adhere to their own opinions. It would have been wiser, therefore, to have made no second trial after failing in the first.

There were a variety of objects in America to which the views of the ministry might be profitably directed, without selecting those precisely from which no emolument could accrue, and the prosecution of which was avowedly attended with danger. the great object in view was the right of taxation: but were it not more prudent for Great Britain to lay that speculative point intirely aside, and confine herself to what long experience had proved was practicable, and void of all perplexity?

There were instances without number, wherein the acquiescence of the Colonies might be depended on:—Why should one wander from them in search of those where it was clear they would remain inflexible?



Popular prejudices should not be combated, when the victory over them would cost more than it was worth. Thus, allowing the Americans to act upon a wrong principle, still as it was deeply fixed, to employ violent methods in the cure of it, would be like tearing up a tree by the roots, in endeavouring to clear it of some noxious branches.

But whether the Americans were right or wrong, was no longer a question. An idea was now taken up, that the dignity of the state must, at all hazards, be supported. This was indeed an argument of some weight; and was in itself an object deserving of attention. But was it not equally proper to consider well the occasion upon which a nation's honour is to be asserted? Was the nation's dignity, any more than her interest, concerned in the enforcing of a tax universally odious to them upon whom it was imposed, and the produce of which did not deserve the pains and expence that would be required to raise it?

The Americans were a keen and intelligent people. They clearly saw that the principal intent of the duties laid upon them, was to raise a fund for the gratification and recompense of those among them who were willing to co-operate in ministerial measures. They could not therefore be expected to submit, unless they were compelled by a force superior to that which they would be able, and probably would not fail to exert, in opposition to any such attempt.

But of all severities, none could surpass that of bringing delinquents in America to be tried in Britain. This was evidently repugnant to the spirit of the constitution. It was renewing those unhappy times, when tyranny and cruelty were seated upon the throne, and sported with the liberty and life of the subject. Of all obsolete statutes, those made



in the bloody reign of Henry the Eighth, should last of all be recurred to at the present day.

What justice, what humanity could warrant the tearing a man away three thousand miles across the seas, to be tried for an offence of which at last he may be found innocent; but for which, by this mode of trial, he is previously made to suffer? Remote from his natural friends and connections, destitute of support and advice, he is delivered into the hands of power, and tried by a jury of strangers, perhaps under its influence, and who cannot be supposed to feel the same interest for him as they would for one of themselves.

In answer to these objections, the adherents to administration still contended for the necessity of a direct and explicit acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Great-Britain on the part of America.—Nothing else was required. The tax lately imposed could not be considered as any emolument to the revenue; it was meant merely as an homage to the supreme power of the parent state; and though it might be a mortification to the pride of the Colonists, it certainly was no incumbrance on their property.

It was high time to repress the republican disposition of the people of Massachusetts, whose licentiousness and insolence were the more daring, as they perceived a backwardness to check it. In the former reigns such proceedings as had happened in the present, would have met with immediate chastisement. Nothing, therefore, but spirited resolves, supported by vigorous measures, would remedy the evils complained of, and restore that subordination in the Colonies, which was absolutely requisite for the general interest of the British empire.

Such were the reasonings and opinions of the party that recommended coercive measures. Those of lenity had proved so fruitless, that they imagined  
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It was impolitic and absurd to trust to them any longer.

In the mean while, the arrival of the British troops at Boston, had been productive of very alarming events. During some time, an appearance of harmony had subsisted between them and the inhabitants; but the intent of their coming rendered their presence obnoxious. They did not evidently come as friends: they were, on the contrary, the most dangerous foes; as under pretence of maintaining tranquility, they came with an intent to subvert public freedom, and establish a despotic authority. Such were the ideas prevailing throughout the American continent.

While the forces that had arrived continued the same in number, they were too formidable to be insulted with impunity. But the departure of a large detachment having greatly diminished them, the people of Massachusetts came, it seems, to the resolution to expel this small remainder, which they looked upon with equal aversion and contempt. So little were they either regarded or dreaded, that one of the town magistrates took occasion publicly to represent them as a meer handful. The designs forming against them, were not, however, so secretly managed, as to be entirely concealed. An intimation of this kind put an end to what little cordiality might have subsisted between them and the inhabitants. Mutual insults and provocations quickly followed; and pursuant to the intent proposed, the people in the country took up arms, and prepared to join those of Boston. But before matters were duly settled for the execution of this plot, an accident happened, which prevented it from taking place in the manner designed.

In the evening of the fifth of March, 1770, some soldiers were assaulted and beaten by a party of the town's-people.—A tumult en-



fued;—the inhabitants collected from all parts of the town, threatening destruction to the military, whom they attacked with clubs and bludgeons.—Provoked at this usage, some of the soldiers fired upon the populace, several of whom were killed and wounded.

The consequence of this unhappy fray was, that in order to prevent further bloodshed, it was judged necessary to remove the troops to Castle William. Had they not retired in this manner, it is propable they would have been cut to pieces. The whole Province of Massachusetts was up in arms, and would easily have overpowered the small number to which they were then reduced.

The stationing of these troops at Boston, had not produced those ends for which they had been sent. The Colonies still continued in their former resolution to oppose British importations. Associations were publicly formed for this purpose; they met regularly, as if duly authorised by law; and appointed committees to inspect the cargoes of all vessels arriving from Britain. Severe censures were passed upon all who refused to concur in those associations; and their names were published in the newspapers, as enemies to their country. The resolves and decrees of these meetings met with a compliance and respect which was utterly denied to the authority of government.

In some cases, goods imported from Great Britain were immediately seized as soon as landed, and secured in warehouses to prevent their sale: in other cases they reshipped them to Great-Britain.

Upon receiving intelligence of these proceedings, the Parliament was highly incensed, and a determination was consequently taken not to relax from vigorous measures, which, in the opinion of the majority, was become more necessary than ever.

In



In order, at the same time, to make it evident, that they were no less observant of moderation than actuated by zeal for the dignity of the British Legislature, they repealed all the late duties, excepting that upon tea, which was reserved merely to save the national honour in the midst of so much condescension ; and as an object which nothing but a settled resolution to quarrel with Great Britain, could render deserving of any animadversion on the part of the Americans.

Many weighty arguments, however, were adduced against the continuation even of this duty. It amounted, in truth, to no more than sixteen thousand pounds ; but would be considered in America as an inlet to other taxes on the same plan, whenever time and opportunity were more favourable than the present, for the British ministry to make such an attempt.

Experience showed this reasoning to have been well founded. The continuance of the duty upon tea, trifling as it was, excited the murmurs of the Colonies in a violent degree. They objected to it precisely on the same ground the opposition in Parliament had done, as an imposition, which, if they consented to it, would be made a precedent, upon which others of the same nature might in future be demanded.

What, in all probability, much contributed to the inflexibility of the Colonies, was the critical situation of affairs in Europe at this season †. To say nothing of the discontents prevailing from various causes at home, a rupture was apprehended with the House of Bourbon. They who patronised the Colonies, did not fail to urge these as weighty motives to avoid any altercation with them ; and to sacrifice the little interests in agitation between them and the mother country, to the greater ob-

† 1771.



jects that might shortly employ the whole attention and power of Great Britain.

This inflexible spirit, instead of being in the least allayed, seemed in fact to increase of late, in proportion to the concessions made by Parliament to the Colonies. These concessions they looked upon as extorted by their own firmness; and as owing, by no means, to the benignity of the British government.

Conformably to this disposition, they continued to encourage their own manufactures, and to discourage those of Great Britain, as far as it was practicable in a country that could not well thrive and flourish without importing a considerable number of the most essential articles requisite for the prosecution of the most necessary branches of business, and could not, at the same time, procure many of them any where upon such advantageous terms as from Great Britain.

Thus, notwithstanding the agreements of non-importation, in which they were at first so sanguine and zealous, they relaxed by degrees, prompted by convenience and interest; and the general intercourse in commercial matters was carried on as usual, without any material interruption.

But the political intercourse was attended every where with perpetual disputes. Governors were embroiled in daily contests with their Provincial Assemblies. Prorogations and dissolutions followed each other of course, accompanied by censures on the one side, and remonstrances on the other.

These incessant altercations could not fail further to debilitate the powers of government, already weakened through preceding causes. The reverence due to lawful authority seemed in a manner to be obliterated in the minds of the generality, and they seemed to consider themselves as at liberty to  
act



act in all matters of trade and business without any sort of restraint.

This unruliness was prevalent every where. At Boston the resistance to the Custom-house officers continued to manifest itself upon every occasion; and was sometimes accompanied with great instances of inhumanity. Among others, a tidesman, who had seized a vessel for breach of the acts of trade, was seized by the populace, stripped, and carted about the town, besmeared with tar, and stuck with feathers.

At the town of Providence, in Rhode Island, a place long notorious for smuggling, the people boarded a King's vessel stationed there to prevent it; treated the commander with great indignity; struck and wounded him; and after forcing him and the ship's company to go on shore, set her on fire.

These daring insults were fully countenanced by their ruling men. The General Assembly of Massachusetts did not hesitate openly to notify to the Governor, that they acknowledged no such officers in the Colony as the Commissioners of the King's Customs, nor knew of any revenue that he had any right to establish there.

Upon receiving the news that salaries had been settled upon the justices of the Superior Court at Boston, the most inflammatory language was held throughout the Province. An address was presented to the Governor, wherein that measure was censured in terms of the greatest asperity; and a committee was appointed to take it into consideration, selected as usual out of the different districts of the colony.

This Assembly explicitly disavowed the supremacy of the British legislature over them. They asserted that all men had a clear right to remain in a state of nature so long as they thought proper; and in pursuance of this principle, they accused the



British Parliament of having violated their natural rights in a variety of cases ; but especially by assuming the powers of legislation over them, in virtue of its own will, and contrary to their own consent.

Copies of the transactions of this committee were industriously circulated in every town of Massachusetts. They were accompanied by letters, warmly exhorting the inhabitants to rouse themselves, and to remain no longer indolent and supine, while the iron hand of oppression was daily tearing the choicest fruits from the fair tree of liberty. Such were their expressions.

In the midst of these disturbances an accident happened, which contributed remarkably to increase the ill-humour and discontents of the Province. A number of letters written confidentially to persons in place and power in England, by the present Governor and Deputy Governor, were accidentally discovered, and communicated to the public. They contained unfavourable representations of the dispositions of the people in general, and of the secret views of their leaders ; their intent was to show the necessity of coercive measures, and of altering the form of government in order to secure the people's future obedience.

The wrath and indignation excited on this occasion produced the most violent resolutions in the Assembly. The original letters had fallen into the possession of their agent at London, who transmitted them immediately to his constituents. They were carried up to the council by deputations, who were strictly enjoined not to trust them an instant out of their hands. In this mortifying manner they were presented for inspection to the Governor, who could not deny his own signature.

In consequence of this discovery, a petition was sent over to England, earnestly entreating the King to remove both these officers from their places ; but  
contrary



contrary to this request, they not only were continued, but the petition was declared groundless and scandalous. This answer added fresh rancour to the animosity and resentment of the people of Massachusetts.

But another transaction was now preparing, the consequences of which were far more fatal.

Notwithstanding the resolutions adopted in the Colonies against the importation of tea from Great Britain, means had been found to import it, though in smaller quantities than heretofore, owing partly to the lower price of that brought from other countries. This diminution was very prejudicial to the East India Company; and the more felt at this time, as they had lately experienced some mortifications from government. In order to make them some compensation, the Parliament empowered them to export their tea free of any duty payable by the Company †.

In virtue of this permission, the Company freighted several ships with tea for North America, and appointed agents to dispose of it in the several colonies.

This open and avowed manner of bringing a commodity among them, in direct defiance to their consent and opposition, was, in their opinion, an insult not to be suffered. Private interest, as well as public aversion to this measure, contributed to render it odious. The dealers in tea foresaw that the profits of this branch of business, which were very considerable, would henceforward center exclusively amongst the Company's factors.

Unfortunately for the measure, these factors were the professed adherents and supporters of the British administration: this, of course, rendered them extremely unpopular; and was alone a sufficient motive to defeat the business committed to their management.



Those persons to whom the tea destined for Boston was consigned, were unhappily of the family, and nearest connections of those who had written the letters that had given such general offence.

From these causes, together with the long subsisting determination to counteract the designs of the British ministry, a settled resolution was taken throughout the Colonies to oppose the landing of the tea.

They communicated their sentiments to each other, and were unanimous in the persuasion, that if the tea was suffered to be brought ashore, it would become impracticable to prevent the sale of it.—thus the tax would take place, in spite of all their endeavours to the contrary.

In the mean time the people assembled every where in large bodies; and to make their resolves the more speedily effectual, they compelled the consignees to resign their appointments, and solemnly engage never to resume them. Committees were chosen, who took upon them to act with great authority. They examined the accounts of merchants, framed public tests, and declared such as refused them enemies to their country. They were invested, in short, with all those powers which a discontented people are so ready to trust their leaders with.

Under the guidance and sanction of these rulers, every sort of licentiousness was tolerated. The public prints, from one end of the continent to the other, were continually filled with invectives against the councils and policy of Great Britain. They summoned the people to resistance from all quarters, and represented them as devoted to despotism, unless they universally rose to face those internal, as well as external enemies, who were leagued in a conspiracy to oppress them.

Such



Such was the purport of the language they used both in their speeches and writings. These sentiments were not only those of the commonalty; they were now adopted by all classes indiscriminately, and were the avowed principles of the community.

While America was thus deliberately preparing to encounter the designs of Britain, three ships, freighted with tea, entered the harbour of Boston †. The danger, or rather the impracticability of landing it, was so manifest, that the captains would willingly have carried it back to England, could they have obtained a formal permission from those who were officially authorised to grant one. In this state of suspense, the inhabitants, who saw that if they were suffered to remain in the harbour, the tea would infallibly be landed, notwithstanding all precautions against it, resolved to put an end to the difficulty at once, by a blow that should strike radically at all attempts of this kind.

After giving notice to the consignees, the owners, and the captains, that they would not permit them to bring their teas ashore, and insisting on their departure from Boston with their cargoes, upon finding that the Governor and Custom-house refused their consent, without which the ships could not leave the harbour, a number of men, disguised like Indians, boarded them, and threw the whole cargoes into the sea.

The same treatment was experienced by the vessels laden with tea in other parts of America. At Philadelphia, the pilots were forbidden to conduct them up the river Delaware; and at New York, though some chests of tea were landed under the protection of a man of war, the Governor was constrained to deliver them into custody, to preserve the public peace.

† Nov. 1773.

But



But had the masters of those vessels been suffered to bring the tea on shore, they would probably have found no persons daring enough to take charge of them; so great was the dread of the associations that had declared against its importation.



## C H A P. IV.

*Boston Port Bill.*

**T**HE news of these proceedings in America || arriving while Parliament was sitting, was immediately communicated to both Houses by a formal message from the Throne.

This message intimated in the strongest terms, the necessity of taking the most spirited and speedy measures, to put a stop to them; and of framing such regulations as might efficaciously prevent their repetition, and secure an undisputed dependence of the Colonies on the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain.

To prove the propriety of this message, a large number of papers were laid before the Houses relating to the late transactions in Massachusetts, and in other parts of America. They contained the votes and resolutions of the Colonies previous to the arrival of the ships with the tea; the conduct of the people when they arrived; the menacing speeches in their meetings; and the daringness and licentious language universally current in their publications.

The behaviour of the inhabitants of Boston was particularized on this occasion as highly deserving of reprobation and punishment. Every endeavour had been used to engage their assistance for the preservation of tranquility; but they had treated these endeavours with fullness and contempt: they had even, in their corporate capacity, publicly insulted the sheriff in one of their town meetings, upon his officially warning them to break up that assembly as illegal.

Thus they had bidden open defiance to all civil authority, and taken the reins of government out



of the lawful hands ; transferring it to themselves, and exercising actually all its powers according to their own judgment and determination.

The conclusion was, that it being evident from all the documents subjected to the inspection of government, that the re-establishment of peace and order in that Colony could not be effected without a direct and vigorous interposition of Parliament, its powers ought now to be called into action, and could not be too soon exerted.

It was urged that such as were intimately conversant in the affairs of the Colonies, unanimously agreed, that in their present circumstances nothing but such a measure would bring them to reason, and induce them to recognize the lawful sovereignty of Great Britain without further chicanery and dispute.

The indignation without doors was equally roused against the Americans, as well as that expressed by Parliament. As it appeared that they might easily have defeated the tea scheme without proceeding to such violent extremities, the warmth with which their cause had been espoused was now much abated ; they began to be viewed in the light of a rash, unruly people, ready to plunge into a serious quarrel for slight causes, and forgetful of the amicable intercourse that had so long subsisted between them and the parent state, and of the affectionate manner with which they had been supported even in the present contest, by the good wishes and countenance of a considerable part of the British nation.

Swayed in no small degree by this consideration, as well as by the preceding arguments, the Parliament presented an address to the Throne, promising their firmest concurrence in the measures it had recommended for the subduing of the refractory disposition of the Colonies.

This



This address, however, was not unanimous : there were many who thought that previous to the adoption of so weighty a measure, as that of absolute coercion, the motives on which it was founded should be examined and discussed with the utmost freedom and latitude. That is was a step which, when once taken, could not with facility be recalled, and would in the mean time involve Great Britain in such difficulties and dangers as were fitter to be left to the imagination of those to whom they were thus hinted, than to be now made a subject of explicit description.

America, it was argued, was universally ripe for the most obstinate resistance, in case force should be used in the business of taxation. Parliament might insist upon the lawfulness of taxing the Colonies ; but the Colonies themselves would decide whether they would submit or refuse to be taxed. Past experience had shown that they were determined to oppose this measure :—Why should the ministry, therefore, presume to act upon so dangerous a ground as that of coercion, with so many warnings of its impropriety ? The only prospect of success was founded upon a force superior to that of America : but were Great Britain to put forth her strength upon this occasion, would not the expenses prove immense ? And were she to succeed, would not the ill temper and resentment of the Americans remain unconquered, and become a source of constant suspicions on our side, and of malevolence on theirs, which would break out on the least opportunity of exercising it to our detriment ?

In the present dispute, two national bodies differed on a point of speculation ; and one of the two was to be materially affected by the issue of the dispute. It became them both, therefore, to proceed with the utmost caution, and to afford no causes of irritation on either side. The point litigated, was  
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of the most delicate nature, involved in doubts and perplexities, and would not, unfortunately, admit of a decision that would satisfy either of the contending parties. Great Britain claimed a right to tax America; America denied that right.—The former had cut short the matter, by deciding in its own favour; but the latter refused to acknowledge the justice of that decision; and pleaded the inequity of condemning one of the parties concerned, in so summary a manner: this was assuming an authority which was founded upon meer presumption.

America, it was true, derived its political existence from Britain, but was now become a considerable nation, and ought therefore to be treated with respect. Due attention should be paid to the ideas prevailing in such a nation; and care should be taken not to give offence to so large a body, by insisting upon their relinquishing persuasions and principles which they hold as fundamental in their constitution. That in this litigation, the contending parties stood on very different ground. Great Britain would lose nothing by making concessions, and waving the rights she had claimed; but America had much to lose by yielding to the demands made upon her.—They were of a nature that affected her in the tenderest part: they deprived her of the consequence to which she thought herself justly entitled, and degraded her in her own ideas. This was too much for a numerous and respectable people to bear.—They could not comply without rendering themselves unhappy in their own apprehensions; such a concession ought not, therefore, to be required by a nation that called itself friendly and generous.

On these considerations, Great Britain would act a part consistent with its magnanimity, and no ways repugnant to its interest, if duly reflecting on the equity of relinquishing a question which she could not decide in her own favour, without occasioning



sioning much calamity, she would nobly and wisely abandon all pretensions, that were not manifestly her due, and clearly assented to by the other party.

A condescendence of this kind would deliver Great Britain at once from all difficulties : it would preclude all occasions of dispute, by leaving the Colonies in the quiet possession of those notions that were so dear to them, and would secure their adherence by the dearest of all ties, that of their interest, which they were too intelligent not to know consisted in a close attachment to Great Britain.— A dissolution of this connection must undoubtedly be attended with many inconveniencies to them : but though they were conscious of this, yet they were not the less resolved to abide by them all, rather than consent to those requisitions on the part of Great Britain which were the subject of the present altercation. Such had been their resolve from its commencement ; and in matters of this kind, experience daily showed, that the further men advanced, the less they were willing to recede.

By these, and the like arguments, did the opposers of the ministerial measures endeavour to prevent their taking effect. But the prepossession against America was so strong, that no reasonings could withstand it. Such as contended for the necessity of asserting the supremacy of Great Britain, at all events, were such a majority, that all hopes were lost of rendering their determinations ineffectual.

It may be added, that facts were on their side.— The opposition of the Americans had broken out into acts of great violence. They had treated individuals outrageously, and some with unwarrantable barbarity. In the resentment which such behaviour excited, the provocation to it was forgotten, and chastisement was looked upon as no more than a just



and necessary assertion of the honour and dignity of the nation.

When the opponents of ministry warned them to look back before they proceeded further on this principle, and to examine impartially their own conduct in America, thir answer was,—that however that might have been disagreeable to the Americans, it was justifiable on the general ground of supreme sovereignty, so repeatedly asserted by the British legislature. Great Britain was now called upon to maintain her decision. The question therefore was not whether she should relinquish her claims, but how to support them most effectually.

It was now moved, that a forcible and vigorous plan of acting should be adopted, and carried into immediate execution. That in this determination to restore peace and good order throughout the Colonies, that one which had invariably led the way to disobedience and confusion, should be first animadverted to, and singled out as an object of Parliamentary resentment. This Colony the Parliament and the whole nation knew to be Massachusetts. Here it was that resistance had constantly originated; and here it was incumbent on them, for that reason, to begin the work of punishment for past, and of prevention against future offences.

The late outrageous proceedings at Boston were of such a nature, that were Great Britain to pass them over without the severity they deserved, it would degrade her in the opinion of all the powers of Europe, whose attention was universally fixed on her present conduct, and would subject her to indignities without end from the Colonies. Had the proudest power in any quarter of the globe insulted her in the manner the town of Boston had done, she must, and would undoubtedly have insisted on the amplest satisfaction; much more was she entitled to it from



from a place subject to her dominion, and which she herself had founded.

It was therefore proposed, that the town of Boston should pay for the tea that had been destroyed in its harbour. The disguise assumed by the destroyers, was no mitigation of the offence imputed to the town in its corporate capacity. The temper of the inhabitants, the resolves of the town-meetings, the neglect of their magistrates, in making no inquiry after offenders, the passiveness of all persons possessed of influence during these proceedings, and their evident connivance at all irregularities,—these and other instances, needless to alledge, were convincing proofs that the commission of that offence was, though indirectly, yet indisputably countenanced by the inhabitants of Boston. They ought therefore to make compensation to the sufferers; to which purpose it was proper to lay a public fine on the town, adequate to the loss sustained.

But beside this indemnification for the injury done to private individuals, a public reparation was equally due to the honour of the British nation, no less hurt by so daring an insult. To this intent it was moved, that the port of Boston should be shut up, and precluded from all commercial business, until the fine imposed for the payment of the tea was discharged, and solemn assurances given that in future the inhabitants would submit to the laws of trade and revenue enacted by the British Parliament. After making such atonement, the king might, as soon as he thought proper, revoke the prohibition against the use of their harbour, and restore them to all their privileges.

This act, though severe in appearance, was not so, it was said, in reality. The duration of the punishment inflicted upon the people of Boston, lay entirely at their own option. An acquiescence in



the requisitions made by Parliament, would remove it instantly. But if they should continue obstinate in their denial of obedience, they alone would become answerable for the consequences; and it were unworthy of the spirit and character of the British nation, to suspend the punishment they had so justly incurred, till full satisfaction had been obtained.

The business proposed might, it was added, be effected by a few frigates, without calling in the aid of the military. This would prevent disturbances and bloodshed, and compel them to submit quietly, when they saw their whole trade at a stand. It would also intimidate the refractory in the other Colonies, by showing them with how much facility Great Britain could enforce obedience whenever she chose it.

This famous bill did not remain long in agitation: the temper of both Houses was so warm upon this occasion, as well as that of the nation at large, that it passed with a great majority, and was received with general satisfaction.

Petitions were however presented against it by the Agent for the Province of Massachusetts, and by several natives of North America. They represented that it was repugnant to strict equity, to condemn a whole people unheard, and at such a distance; that on a prosecution of the offenders, if they could be discovered, Parliament might rest assured, that a due execution of the law would take place: that in public commotions it was difficult to come at the guilty; but that to punish indiscriminately the whole community for the offences of a few, was an unwarrantable and dangerous precedent: that the interposition of Parliament in such matters, was unnecessary and illegal, as other tribunals were erected for those purposes. These alone had a right to take cognizance of such cases; as they were  
amenable



amenable only before the judicial courts. The act tended therefore to alienate the Colonies, whose affections to Great Britain were founded on her benevolence and justice to them, but would be radically destroyed by this arbitrary exertion of authority.

These petitions were zealously seconded by the opposition. It contended against the delivery of the town of Boston into the power of the Crown, as a measure wholly indefensible, and which might, upon future occasions, become an instrument of the most fatal nature to the liberty of the subject. No trial had preceded this delivery; it was concluded upon merely in consequence of an accusation; which, though possibly well-founded, had not been proved. This was inverting the due order of proceeding, and opening a door to discretionary power. Such a power was incompatible with the freedom of the British constitution, which enjoins, that no man, much less a whole community, should be adjudged guilty, but upon fair and open trial. A sentence of punishment previous to this essential formality, could not therefore be considered in any other light than as an act of tyranny.

Allowing the demand of indemnification for the loss of the tea to be just, was it equitable to suspend at the same time the whole trade and business of a populous city, which had no other means of subsisting? This was wantonly adding the extremes of vindictiveness to the necessity of punishment, on a supposition that there had been a just cause for inflicting it.

Ministry ought not to imagine that America would think Boston alone was struck at by this blow: it was aimed so visibly at all the Colonies, that they would resent it as much as if each of them had felt it. The cause of one was now become the cause of all. The rejection of the tea was the deed



of all America ; and if it was a criminal act, they all partook of the guilt, and must be sensible that Britain meant at a convenient season to extend the punishment equally to all.



## C H A P. V.

*Acts for new-modelling the Governments of Massachusetts and Quebec.*

AFTER passing the act against the town and harbour of Boston §, it was proposed, that in order to temper justice with mercy, and to let the Americans see that conciliation, and not revenge, was predominant in Britain, the tax upon tea, that had given birth to the late disturbances in that place, should be entirely repealed. This would evince the sincerity of the mother country, in its endeavours to bring about a reconciliation with the Colonies, and prove that pecuniary emoluments were not so much her aim, as the desire of securing herself from the disgrace of not daring to resent affronts and ill usage.

But the ministerial party would not hearken to such a measure; which, in their opinion, favoured of weakness and imbecility, as if Britain repented of the step she had just taken, and in order to deprecate the forgiveness of America, was willing to atone for it by an equivalent condescension another way. It would convince them that Britain was conscious of wanting justice in her claims, or power to make them good. This persuasion would induce them to put no stop to their pretensions; or, what was worse, to bid open defiance to those of Britain, and throw off all remainder of dependence. It would therefore be acting both a more prudent, as well as manly part, to persist in the work begun, and to wait with an inflexible firmness, the issue of the measures which the wisdom of so large a majority had adopted.



It was even alledged, that the preceding act, however spirited, would not suffice to lay that rebellious disposition which seemed woven into the very frame of the present system of government in the Province of Massachuset. It was the production of the republican genius that animated the first settlers in that country, and carried with it all the marks of an inveterate hatred to royalty. While it remained in its pristine form, no lasting peace would subsist in the Province of Massachuset, as no permanent submission to the authority of Great Britain could be depended on. It was therefore become indispensibly requisite to mould it into another shape, and render it more consistent with the spirit of monarchical government.

A motion was made in consequence, for the better regulation of government in that Colony.—The purport of it was to alter some parts of its charter; to deprive the House of Representatives of the privilege of electing the Members of the Council; and to empower the Crown to appoint these, together with the judges, sheriffs, and magistrates of all denominations, and to remove them at its pleasure.

In doing this, no more, it was said, was attempted than to place that Province on the same footing as several others. The motive for this alteration was, that Government in that Province did not possess a sufficient share of power: too much was lodged in the hands of the people. It ought therefore to be taken from them, to prevent a repetition of those riots, that proceeded from a defect of authority to enforce the laws, in those to whom the execution of them was entrusted. Their dependence on the people rendered them averse to curb the licentiousness of the vulgar, by disobliging whom they might lose much interest and support. While such a system was suffered to continue, no obedience



ence could be expected, as no magistrate would dare to execute his duty in the suppression of disturbances.

This bill was vigorously combated by the opponents of ministry. It was represented as a stretch of power unconstitutional in the extremest degree ; and sufficient of itself to rouse all America into opposition, had no other cause or pretence ever been afforded : the Colonies would immediately suspect that Britain was intending to lay the axe to the root of all their franchises and liberties ; in a word to destroy at once all their charters. If Britain could treat one Colony in this manner, it would not hesitate to treat them all in the same ; it would new model their constitution, and bring them to such a state of dependence on her will, as to leave them not even the shadow of freedom.

Charters were dangerous things to meddle with in a free country. It was by attacking the charters of the great corporations in England, the Princes of the Stuart line had rendered themselves odious, and kindled a spirit of discontent among their subjects, that paved a way to the revolution. Great Britain had always expressed a peculiar abhorrence of such proceedings ; why should she hold them less disagreeable to the Colonies ? If charters were sacred in England, they were equally so in America : they were the foundation stone of their various governments : they were the original contract between the parent state and its foreign settlements : to annul them was to dissolve the ties by which they were bound to Great Britain.

But to what purpose were these charters to be broken or altered in any particular Colony ? They were all equally hostile to the pretensions of Britain. Did the other Colonies express less repugnance than that of Massachusetts to comply with the ordinances of the British legislature ? Were they not from one  
end



end of the continent to the other as zealous in opposing them? To attempt an infringement of that Colony's charter, would only open a new scene of contention more dangerous than any of those that had preceded. Former attempts aimed only at parts of their immunities ; but this was levelled at the whole. Every Colony would view it in this light ; and it could not be doubted that the moment the intelligence of this transaction reached the shores of America, the Colonies would make it a common cause.

As to the plea so strongly insisted upon by the ministry, of bringing, by this regulation, the government to a nearer conformity with that of Great Britain, though it might be true in some respects, it was unfounded in the two most essential points ; the nomination of the judges, and of the members of the council : these, who are supposed to be in America, what the House of Peers is in England, are by this bill removeable at the King's pleasure, as well as the judges ; whereas in England both Peers and Judges enjoy their seats independently of the Crown.

Petitions were presented against this bill by the agent for the Colony of Massachusetts, and by the Americans in England, as they had done against the former, and with the like success.

The stile of these petitions was extremely pathetic, and foreboded in the minds of those who were acquainted with the character of the Americans, what would indubitably come to pass when they were apprized of what the British Parliament had decreed concerning them.

These petitions pointed out, with a kind of prophetic freedom, the consequences that would infallibly attend the passing of this bill. They implored the House to consider well the severity with which the Americans were treated ; and whether it were possible for men of sense and spirit to endure it  
with



with any degree of patience : they entreated them to ponder on the warmth of attachment so long and so sincerely felt by the Americans for the British nation : they besought them to remember they were Englishmen in their education and principles ; as passionately fond of liberty, and as resolutely determined never to lose it but with their lives : that while Britain behaved to them like a parent, their affection would always prompt them to stand by her as faithful children ; but that if forgetting the mutual obligations that bind them to each other, she should unadvisedly endeavour to reduce them to the condition of slaves, she could not reasonably expect them to submit.

But these remonstrances were overborn by the torrent of resentment that prevailed against America. The absolute need of putting a final period to the long series of confusions that had distracted that country, was an argument that silenced all others. The present state of that country, it was said, offered nothing but irregularity and lawlessness : in desperate cases, desperate remedies were necessary : the case of America was such in every respect : Great Britain was now compelled to make an option between the total relinquishment of America, or the reduction of it to terms of obedience : upon mature consideration she chose the latter. Having made this choice, it was vain and unworthy of her to cavil and debate any longer about such points as she had resolved never to give up : she was at the same time convinced that her resolution was founded on the most substantial and valid reasons ; they had been fully and freely canvassed ; and their weight was allowed by a great majority of suffrages, the only method of deciding questions of such importance.

The concurrence expressed in the passing two acts of such consequence, induced the ministry to come forward



forward with a third ; which was to complete the former, and render them effectual. It was intended for the impartial administration of justice in the case of such persons as might be employed in the execution of laws, and the suppression of riots, and tumults in the Province of Massachusetts ; and it provided, that if persons acting in that capacity should be indicted for murder, and a fair trial could not be had in the province, the Governor should be authorised to send the person accused to be tried in some other colony, or to England, if necessary.

Such was the tenor of this act. It was supported in the debates it occasioned, by arguments drawn from the necessity of encouraging people to act with courage and confidence, against the irregularities that would probably ensue on the carrying the resolves of Parliament into execution at Boston. It was fully expected the people of Massachusetts would exercise that resistance against them, which they had so often surmised in their remonstrances. As it was determined on the other hand to enforce them at all events, blood would probably be shed : but if the military thus employed in the service of their country, were to be subjected to a court of judicature, composed of individuals belonging to that Colony, partiality and revenge would naturally prompt these to treat them with all possible severity.

It was replied in opposition to these assertions, that such an act would not produce that impartiality which was its supposed intent : the same spirit of faction which would condemn the accused before an American tribunal, would absolve them before an English one. But it was unjust to cast such suspicions on the Americans. The case of Captain Preston, tried and acquitted by them, proved that they would do justice even to those whom they considered as their enemies. He had headed a party of soldiers who had killed several of the inhabitants of  
Boston ;



Boston; yet in the midst of the resentments this action had caused, he met with all the lenity that could be expected.

It was further insisted, that the real design of such an act was to erect a military government, by rendering the soldiery responsible to those only whose cause they supported. This would encourage them in the perpetration of all kind of violence, and occasion much more mischief than could possibly arise from leaving them to the ordinary course of justice in the country where they might be stationed.

This bill meeting with the same success as the two preceding, emboldened ministry to bring a fourth into Parliament; which was represented as no less proper at the present season than the others. It was to form a permanent establishment in the Province of Quebec, of which it was alledged the government had not hitherto been carried on upon any settled plan.

By this bill the limits of that Province were extended much further than they stood at the time of the last general peace. The affairs of the Province were put under the direction of a council, in which the King's Roman Catholic subjects in Canada were to be admitted. The members of this council were to be appointed by the Crown; and removable at its option. It was to be invested with the powers of legislation, and to exercise all the functions annexed to such powers, excepting that of imposing taxes: the French laws were established in civil cases without a jury; and the English laws with a trial by jury only in criminal matters. The Roman Catholic secular clergy, were secured in their possessions, and in the receipt of their usual tythes from persons of their own communion.

The arguments upon which this act was grounded, were, that the inhabitants of Canada having been used to a French government and laws, did not wish for an alteration of either; preferring them, in fact,  
to



to those of England, and dreading the consequences of those popular systems of governing of which they saw the effects in the continual disturbances throughout the English Colonies. That as to religion, nothing had been done but conformably to the promises made at the time of the capitulation; and that as to the extension of the boundaries, it took in chiefly such French people as had settled in places beyond their former limits.

But these arguments were far from satisfactory to the opposition. They objected that an arbitrary government could not legally be set up within the British dominions; and that for Parliament to become instrumental in establishing it, was an object of astonishment. There was no kind of necessity for such a measure: an assembly might have been formed like those in the English Colonies, wherein the Roman Catholics of that Province might have been admitted, as they were in some of the French ceded islands. As to the attachment of the Canadians to absolute power, it was a bare surmise: no people in their senses that had tasted of a free government, would give the other the preference.—The trial by jury was universally allowed to be one of the wisest institutions ever devised for the benefit of the community: it was not only eligible in criminal, but equally in civil cases: it prevented most effectually the invasion of property, and the violation of personal freedom.

The affair of religion was debated with more warmth than any other. By the capitulation, no more, it was said, than the free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion was to take place; but the present act went to a full and circumstantial establishment of it, on a footing superior to that of the Protestant religion, which, by the present measure, could not be deemed to enjoy any more than a simple toleration. Was this consistent with the character



rafter of the British nation, hitherto esteemed the bulwark of the Protestant cause? Was it sound policy to encourage a persuasion, from which so much mischief was used to be apprehended, and of which the maxims instilled in their earliest education had taught them principally to beware?

The extension of the boundaries of that Province was reprobated with great asperity: it was justifying, in a manner, those claims of France that had occasioned the last war: it was appropriating territories to a government that was intended to be the seat of arbitrary power; and taking them from those who had assisted in the conquest of them, in the just and well-founded hope of annexing them to their own possessions. This was a flagrant act of injustice, and would unquestionably be considered as such by all the British Colonies.

If the opposition it met with in Parliament was warm and spirited, the discontent it excited without was much greater. As its appearance was inimical to liberty and Protestantism, the nation at large received it with unusual marks of disapprobation. The former acts were esteemed proper in the present exigencies to curb the violence of the Americans; but this was looked upon as an attempt to invade the liberty and the religion established by the laws of the land: though an indirect, it seemed no less a real attack upon both, and produced much ill will and suspicion among the generality of people. It had also another effect, of which the ministry was not perhaps aware, when it first ventured to bring it forth. It diminished the popularity of the measures that had been formed against the Americans: it restored them a number of those friends to their cause, whom their late outrageous proceedings had disgusted; and even cooled the fervour with which many had concurred in the views of the ministry,

But



But the zeal and numbers with which their conduct had been supported in Parliament, gave these a full confidence of success. As they imagined the Colonies depended chiefly upon the countenance of their well-wishers at home, they doubted not that upon receiving intelligence, how weak the party was become to which they looked up for assistance, they would lose courage, and acquiesce in the will of Great Britain; especially on beholding full proofs that she was earnest in her determination to bring them into her own measures, at all hazards; and would certainly exert her whole strength, if necessary, to compass an end, in which her interest and dignity were equally and essentially concerned.

The truth was, that the fame and grandeur of the British nation were such at this period, that it was never imagined the Colonies would seriously dare to contend with so formidable a people. As the late triumphs of Great Britain in so many parts of the world, still continued to make an impression upon the minds of its rulers, they flattered themselves that they would still operate in the remembrance of others. In this expectation they judged that when the Americans saw the ancient spirit of the British administration revive, they would not risk a trial of prowess with those fleets and armies, which the combined strength of the two greatest nations in Europe had not been able to resist.



## C H A P. VI.

*Consequences of the foregoing Acts.*

SUCH were the ideas and the hopes of the ministry, and of a great part of the British nation. They were as justly founded as the general experience of mankind could render them; but as the prosperity and adversity of states, as well as individuals, depend upon events and casualties which it is not in the power of political wisdom always to foresee, these flattering expectations, however they might seem reasonable, only served to increase the numberless proofs, how often the wisdom of the compleatest statesmen is deceived in the calculation of those contingencies that decide the fate of nations.

Various were the expectations entertained from the measures now carrying into execution. It was hoped that by depriving Boston of the use of its harbour, the great trade it had hitherto engrossed to itself, would be divided among the other sea ports in the Province of Massachusetts: it was imagined that of course they would exert their best endeavours to retain it, and would not therefore express or feel much concern for the treatment of that town. It was no less believed that the severity exercised upon the Colony of Massachusetts, would strike terror into the others, and might possibly, from the commercial jealousies and competitions that had subsisted between the northern and southern Colonies, be viewed with some secret satisfaction, and hope of deriving some advantage from its depression. Hence it was inferred, that each of them would remain quiet on their own ground; and that instead of intangling themselves in any embarrassment on its ac-



count, the unanimity which had linked them in so many effusions of discontent, would gradually evaporate, and leave them in a more tractable situation.

But these expectations proved groundless in every respect. Instead of showing the least inclination to profit through their misfortune, every proof of attachment and friendship was given to the people of Boston; and they had the satisfaction of seeing themselves applauded and assisted by the whole American continent.

The spirit of opposition had been gathering more strength and determination, than was thought of in Britain, an unfortunate ignorance of the native character of the Americans, was the cause of unspeakable detriment throughout the whole of this contest. The generality of people, many of the first rank not excepted, were fully persuaded that they would never proceed beyond those expressions of discontent, with which they first began. When it was seen, by the measures they adopted upon the rejection of their petitions, that they would not stop at bare complaints, still it was firmly asserted, and unhappily believed, that riots and disturbances would be the utmost of their resentment and resistance. The idea of a steady, regular opposition of force to force, did not enter into the minds of many. It was fondly hoped, that on the sight of the military strength that was now preparing against them, they would decline all further contest, and peaceably submit to the injunctions of Great Britain.

But far different in reality from these notions, was the disposition and temper of the Americans: passiveness and humility were no part of their character: they were bred from their infancy in the highest sentiments of independency; and were taught, by continual examples, to repel every encroachment



croachment upon their property, or personal privileges. They were educated in habits of hardiness and activity, that fitted them betimes for those labours and exertions that accompany a military life. They were uncommonly expert in the use of fire arms; and their native courage and intrepidity had been proved upon a variety of occasions, and were never called in question by those who knew them.

The late war had trained numbers of them to the regular use of arms; and they were not deficient in individuals, who had greatly signalized themselves at that time both by sea and land.

Such were the people whom prejudice represented as equally unable and unwilling to face the power and valour of Great Britain in the field; and whom the very terror of her arms would alone be able to conquer.

It was not surprizing, therefore, that animated by that spirit of liberty which, in a nation aspiring at independence, is ever strongest, they should unanimously conspire to support each other in every difficulty they expected to encounter.

This disposition, though common to them, all was conspicuously evident in the Provinces of New-England: the inhabitants of this part of America gloried particularly in their being the genuine descendants of British ancestors, unmixed with foreign blood, and inheriting the qualities upon which the natives of Britain value themselves.

When they were duly apprized of the storm that was gathering against them, they coolly and deliberately prepared to meet it. Every measure was concerted for that purpose which their circumstances enabled them to employ; and they seemed universally resolved to persist, at all perils, in the resistance they had begun.



They now were thoroughly convinced that Great Britain was inflexibly bent on reducing them to a state of unlimited obedience, and intended to govern them henceforward entirely upon such plans as she might think proper to form without their concurrence : they doubted not that in those plans her interests would be wholly consulted, and little notice taken of those of the Colonies : these would unquestionably be rendered entirely subservient to her conveniency ; and every advantage would be taken that force could give, or policy might suggest.

In the full conviction that such would be their treatment, and that of all America, in case Great Britain was suffered to execute her present designs, it was deemed highly proper to combat them by every means in their power. Should they fail in their endeavours, and be overcome by the superior might of their enemy, still their condition would not be worse than if they yielded without resistance ; but if, on the contrary, they proved successful, their future prosperity would make ample amends for the difficulties and distresses they must go through to arrive at the situation they proposed.

Such were the general reasonings of the people in America upon the preparations and menaces of Britain to compel them to submission. Instead of intimidating or disuniting them, the active measures resolved upon by the ministry, had, on the contrary, bound them more firmly to each other than ever. As they now saw they must stand or fall together, all distinctions of interest or persuasion were immediately lost in the great consideration of self-defence and existence : these became the principal objects of their thoughts ; and Great Britain in taking up arms, rather in hope of terrifying them into compliance than in expectation



of coming to hostilities, found them united in a common resolution, to perish sooner than obey.

The high and determined spirit that had showed itself so early in the Province of Massachusetts, still continued. In pursuance of a vote against their acceptance of salaries from the Crown, the Chief Justice and the other Judges of the Superior Court at Boston, were required by the House of Representatives to declare, whether they would receive them as usual from the General Assembly : four of them answered in the affirmative ; but the Chief Justice, Peter Oliver, had the resolution to give them a denial. This produced a petition to the Governor for his removal, which not being complied with, they proceeded to impeach him for having betrayed his trust, and violated the Provincial charter in accepting a salary from the Crown instead of the customary grant from the Assembly. In this bold and decisive measure, eight only declined a concurrence out of one hundred members present on this important occasion.

The Governor refused to receive the accusation exhibited by the Assembly, and declined all interference in the matter. They had required him to act in the capacity of judge on the trial ; but he pleaded incompetency to such an office. They did not recede, on the other hand, and insisted that the law should be executed against the Chief Justice, as an example to deter all men from prostituting their abilities in the disservice of their country, especially in so sacred a place as a Court of Judicature. As it was evident that no obstructions would be found sufficient to prevent them from carrying the point they had proposed, and bringing on a prosecution, which would be attended with great inconvenience and danger, the Governor thought it prudent, in order to suspend all further animosities,



to put an end to the dispute at present, by dissolving the Assembly.

In this situation were the affairs of that Province when intelligence arrived of the Boston Port Bill. Such a measure being totally unexpected, occasioned equal astonishment and alarm. A town meeting was immediately summoned, at which the resolution was taken to put a stop to all trade with Britain and her dependencies, and to procure a like cessation throughout the Colonies, as the only method remaining to induce the British ministry to repeal so severe an act; for the extreme impolicy and injustice of which they appealed to the judgment and feeling of all the impartial world.

Numerous copies of the act were printed and dispersed over all the American continent. They kindled a flame that proved inextinguishable. In order to strike the eyes of the multitude, these copies were on paper edged with black, as usual in mourning, to denote the mortal blow given to the liberty of America. The act was cried about by the vulgar, as a barbarous and cruel murder; and in some places was committed to the flames with great solemnity in the presence of crowds summoned together for that purpose.

In the midst of these disorders General Gage arrived at Boston in quality of Governor. He had been selected by the ministry for this post, as an officer of reputation, and as a gentleman in favour and esteem with the Americans; among whom he had resided many years, and with whose character and disposition he was thoroughly acquainted.

The first official act of his government, was to inform the Assembly of their intended removal to the town of Salem, seventeen miles distant from Boston, in conformity with the late act for depriving this place of the use of its port.



To impress the people at large with a deep sense of the distressed situation they were in, the Assembly requested the Governor to appoint a day of public devotion throughout the Colony, to deprecate the evils impending on it; but the purposes proposed by it were too obvious not to meet with a negative.

Provincial meetings were held in the mean time in every Colony. They all condemned, in the strongest terms of disapprobation, the act that had been passed against Boston: they unanimously protested against the principles on which it was framed, and solemnly agreed to resist it to the last, and to unite in the most vigorous assistance of their persecuted fellow countrymen.

Virginia, as on a former occasion, took the lead in a public avowal of its sentiments. The first day of June had been appointed for the Boston Port Act to take place: on that very day the General Assembly of that Province enjoined a public supplication to heaven in behalf of America. The stile of this injunction was remarkable: the people were directed to beseech the Deity to give them one heart and one mind, firmly to oppose every invasion of the American rights.

The example of Virginia was followed every where; and the first of June observed as a day of universal prayer and seriousness throughout the continent of America.

But independent of these acts of devotion, the members of the Assembly of Virginia entered into an association, in which they declared, that to endeavour by force of arms to compel any Colony to the payment of arbitrary taxes, was, in reality, an attack upon all the Colonies, and would prove their certain ruin, unless prevented by their uniting in a common resistance. They recommended for this purpose a General Congress of the Colonies, to deli-



bérate on the conduct requisite to be adopted in their present critical circumstances.

Though Pennsylvania and New York concurred in the general ideas of the Virginians, they still retained that degree of moderation which a due sense of their condition, as a commercial people, could not fail to suggest. A total stoppage of trade with Great Britain was a measure of too serious an importance, in their opinion, to be adopted before all others had been tried, and found ineffectual. The indemnification required for the East India Company, they acknowledged to be just; but they could not admit of a tax which deprived them of the exclusive right to grant their own money. In this matter they continued inflexibly resolved to adhere to their long-taken determinations, and would support the people of Massachusetts to the utmost of their power, against the oppression and ill-usage they might experience on that account.

Such also was the general temper and determination of the Colonies on this subject; invariably fixed in their resolution to abide by their refusal of obedience to Britain in the affair of taxes: but still desirous to abstain from extremities, till every other remedy had failed.

In the mean time, General Gage had a very difficult part to act in his new government. Though much respect was shown to his personal character, yet the task he was commissioned to perform was highly offensive to the people he was sent to govern.

When the Assembly of Massachusetts met at Salem, they did not forget to pass a resolution, declaring the propriety and necessity of a general meeting of all the Colonies in Congress, in order to confer together upon the situation of American affairs. Five gentlemen were named to represent their Province, well known for their strenuous opposition to British measures;



measures ; and a competent sum was voted for their expences.

All this they knew must be highly disagreeable to the Governor ; but as they were sensible that his instructions were by no means favourable to them, they thought themselves entitled, on the other hand, to take what steps they might esteem necessary to counteract them.

Convinced, at the same time, that the moment their intentions were perceived, an end would be put to the session, they used all expedition in drawing up a declaration of their sentiments, to be communicated to the public, as a rule for the conduct of the people of Massachusetts, whose implicit confidence in them would give the force of a law to whatever they should lay before them by way of recommendation and advice.

This declaration contained a repetition of grievances ; the necessity they were now under of struggling against lawless power ; the disregard of their petitions, though founded on the clearest and most equitable reasons ; the evident intention of Great Britain to destroy the constitution transmitted to them from their ancestors, and to erect upon its ruins a system of absolute sway, incompatible with their disposition, and subversive of the rights they had uninterruptedly enjoyed during the space of more than a century and a half. Impelled by these motives, they thought it their duty to advise the inhabitants of Massachusetts to throw every obstruction in their power in the way of such evil designs, and recommended, as one of the most effectual, a total disuse of all importations from Great Britain, until an entire redress had been obtained of every grievance.

Notwithstanding the secrecy with which this business was carried on, the Governor was apprized of it and on the very day it was completed, and the



the report of it made to the House, he dissolved the Assembly; which was the last that was held in that Colony, agreeably to the tenour of its charter.

The dissolution of the General Assembly was followed by an expostulatory address from the inhabitants of Salem; wherein, after deploring the calamities of the times, and their grief for the sufferings of the people of Boston; they entreated the Governor to act towards them with all the lenity that remained in his power; and concluded with these remarkable words:—"By shutting up the port of Boston, some imagine that the course of trade might be turned hither, and to our benefit; but Nature in the formation of our harbour, forbids our becoming rivals in commerce with that convenient mart; and were it otherwise, we must be dead to every idea of justice, lost to all feelings of humanity, could we indulge one thought to seize on wealth, and raise our fortunes on the ruin of our suffering neighbours."

Sentiments of this kind were the more generous and noble, as previous to the altercation between Great Britain and her Colonies, warm competitions in trade had been usual among the towns situated in the neighbourhood of Boston, of whose prosperity some of them were not a little jealous.

As Salem was now become the capital of the Province, and reaping the fruits of that trade which had been taken from Boston, it was imagined that interest would have gained over to the cause of Britain those who were benefited by her measures: but they who reasoned upon this principle, forgot that the passions of men are always stronger than their interest; and that the consideration of this never preponderates but in minds that are cool, and divested of their influence. The Americans, at this crisis, were under the strongest influence of a passion



sion for liberty, and were ready to sacrifice to it all that was dearest to them.

Depending however upon this principle, the friends of the British government had conceived the most sanguine hopes, that removing the scene of business to Salem, would have so much distressed the mercantile classes, that they would gladly have come into the measures required of them; but they remained firm in their engagements, and preferred the inconveniencies and detriment resulting from their perseverance, to the loss of character they must have suffered, had they forsaken the cause of their countrymen.

To this it may be added, that from the fluctuating and precarious situation of public affairs, they foresaw that little emolument could, at present, be expected from their compliance; they wisely chose therefore to wait for a season of more stability.

During these agitations, intelligence arrived at Boston of the two remaining bills that had been framed; the one for the new-modelling of the government of Massachuset, and the annulling of its charter; the other for the administration of justice, upon a new plan.

This intelligence was circulated through the Colonies with the utmost diligence, and completed that measure of resentment which seemed necessary to precipitate them into the most violent measures. Such as before appeared to hesitate, became fixed in their determinations. A cessation of all commercial intercourse was again proposed, and a renewal of all those agreements that tended to the sole use of their own manufactures.

Contributions were now raised in all quarters for the relief of the inhabitants of Boston. Letters and addresses came to them from corporate bodies, and provincial assemblies, praising them in the highest terms for the courage with which they submitted

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to present hardships for the good and honour of their country, and exhorting them to persevere in the stedfast adherence to a cause which could not fail, through such supporters, to become triumphant at last.

But notwithstanding the spirit of violence and hostility to Great Britain, that seemed now to predominate, there still was a large number, who reflecting on the terrible consequences of rushing immediately to arms, laboured carefully to instill their sentiments into others. To these it was owing that the rage and indignation of the majority were kept in any bounds, and that the final decision of the conduct America should pursue, was referred to a general Congress.

But though they succeeded so far as to prevent an immediate commencement of hostilities, they could not put a stop to those proceedings that prepared and fitted the minds of men for any that might happen.

Of all the committees in America, that managed the correspondence on public affairs throughout their own Province, and with the other Colonies, that settled at Boston was composed of some of the most noted persons in America for their abilities, and their antipathy to Britain. Through their efforts and activity, the complaints and discontents at her measures were kept up and propagated; and their zeal was indefatigable in the encouragement of that spirit of resistance, on which they founded the execution of the designs they were meditating.

The arrival of the two last acts of the British Parliament, having raised the fermentation throughout the Province to its highest pitch, this was the time to begin the unfolding of that plan, for which they saw the dispositions of men were daily ripening, and the fairest opportunity given.

They



They prepared an agreement accordingly;— which, in imitation of that which the enemies to monarchy framed during the civil wars in England, in the last century, was entitled a solemn League and Covenant. Herein the subscribers solemnly bound themselves, in the most religious manner, to break off all commercial intercourse with Great Britain after the expiration of the ensuing month of August, until the late obnoxious acts were repealed, and the Colony re-possessed of its charter.— They obliged themselves neither to purchase or to use any goods imported after that term, and to break off all trade and dealings with any who did, as well as with the importers. They renounced all connection with those who should refuse to bind themselves in a similar manner, either by this, or a like agreement; and concluded by threatening to make public the names of all who declined to enter into such engagements.

The committee exerted itself with its usual diligence in the promoting this Covenant, which was attended with a circular letter, exhorting all men to set their names to it, as a test of their fidelity to the cause of their country. All New England adopted it with the utmost zeal.

It was not however at Boston only, and the Provinces of New England, that this spirit of opposition prevailed; the same agreements were as readily entered into elsewhere, and few parts of the American continent were without them.

Astonished and incensed at this extraordinary proceeding, the Governor of Massachusetts issued a proclamation against it, wherein it was styled an illegal and traiterous combination, contrary to the allegiance due to the King, subversive of the authority of Parliament, and destructive to peace and good order. People were forbidden to give it any countenance, under the penalties annexed to such offences;



ces; and the magistrates were admonished to apprehend all persons who should publish, subscribe, or abet any such engagement.

But this proclamation was disregarded; and only served to show what little authority remained to Great Britain in this Colony. Instead of paying it any deference, it was publicly attacked in print, and censured as illegal: the law, it was asserted, did not prohibit subjects from assembling to consider of grievances, and form associations for their relief in cases of oppression.

In the mean time preparations were making for the holding of the intended Congress. Philadelphia, from its situation between the North and South Colonies, was judged the most convenient place for that purpose, and the beginning of September the proper time for meeting. The Deputies who were to compose it were chosen by the Representatives of each Province, out of their respective bodies: two were the least, and seven the largest number sent by any Province; but no Colony had more than a single vote.

The Provincial Assemblies that were held previous to the meeting of the Congress, foreboded the transactions of that meeting. They were, as usual, full of resolutions, censuring in the strongest terms, the conduct of the British legislature, and threatening to break off all commercial correspondence with Great Britain, unless she complied with their requests.

The people in Britain had now a full prospect of what they were to expect from the measures in which they had been so sanguine. They saw an union effected between all their Colonies, founded on the broad bottom of what they esteemed their common interest. It was not the intrigues of a party they had to defeat, but the combined power of a numerous people they had to encounter, bound together



together by common resentments. Experience had proved it impracticable to sow dissensions among them: they were therefore to be combated on their own ground, where unanimity in their cause would produce universal resistance, and whence it were in vain to look for any support.

A sufficient earnest was given of the firmness and constancy that would be met with, in the behaviour of the inhabitants of Boston. Neither fear nor interest had worked the least change in their determination. They continued to bear with a passive, but inflexible fortitude, the inconveniencies and hardships to which they were reduced by the deprivation of their port. These were daily increasing, and began to be an object of alarm to all classes. The assistance they had received from a variety of quarters was very considerable, but was not, however, adequate to the exigencies of a large commercial city, chiefly peopled with individuals employed in the numberless occupations created by an extensive and flourishing trade. Before the present calamity had befallen them, it might with great truth be said, that no place upon earth could exceed, and few rival the happiness of its inhabitants. Boston was, in fact, the seat of commerce and plenty. The immense business it carried on, afforded not only a sufficient, but a comfortable subsistence to individuals of all branches and denominations. Not only the necessary and useful, but the elegant, and even some of the luxurious arts were cultivated amongst them. They were become a polite, a gay, and, what was more to their honour, a friendly and hospitable people; and conducted their enjoyments in a manner that rendered them worthy of their prosperity.

In this happy state of their circumstances, they were sentenced at once to a total deprivation of all means of subsisting. The blow was not partial:

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it reached every person settled there. Labourers, artificers, tradesmen, merchants; every one without exception participated in the general calamity. They bore this sudden reverse with a patience and determination to persist in the same line of acting, that had brought it upon them, which afforded no small matter of surprize to their enemies, and of exultation to their friends.

Among these latter none signalized themselves with more zeal and alacrity than the people of Marble-head, their near neighbours, and who by this proximity, were the most likely to reap the greatest profit by their distress; but instead of endeavouring to turn it to any account, they generously offered to the merchants of Boston the use of their harbour, wharfs, and warehouses, free of all expence.

In the mean time troops were arriving at Boston from all quarters. This increase of a military force occasioned great jealousy throughout the Province. It was looked upon as a denunciation of what they were shortly to expect, in case they continued in their present disposition.

But instead of betraying any signs of change, it gathered strength daily. Proofs were continually given that the people in the neighbourhood of Boston kept a watchful eye on the proceedings of the British troops there; and would, on the least notice of any harsh measures against the inhabitants, fly instantly to their relief.

A report was spread that a body of the military was posted on the isthmus, that joins the peninsula upon which Boston stands, to the main-land, in order to cut off its communication with the country, and compel it by famine to submit to any terms that might be imposed. Hereupon the country assembled in large numbers, and dispatched messengers to Boston to inquire into the truth of  
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this report, and to assure them they might depend upon the speediest assistance, in case of necessity.

They brought with them, at the same time, an errand of far greater importance, as it showed in its fullest light, the reality of their determinations to keep their word with Britain, in resisting her to the last.

This errand was to inform the people of Boston, that were they to lose courage so far as to surrender their liberties, the Province should not look upon itself as bound by such submission: Britain, by breaking their charter, had annulled the original contract subsisting between them; and they were now left to themselves, and at liberty to act for their common preservation, as they thought most advisable.

About the beginning of August, a formal notification of the two last acts relating to the government was received, together with a list of the new council, consisting of thirty-six members. But twelve of the number declined their commissions; and most of those who accepted, were speedily obliged to resign them, in order to save their property and persons from the fury of the multitude.

The judges newly appointed experienced much the same treatment. All the inferior officers of the courts of judicature, the clerks, the juries, and all others concerned, explicitly refused to act under the new laws. In some places the populace shut up the avenues to the court-houses; and upon being required to make way for the judges, and officers of the court, they declared that they knew of no court nor establishment in the Province, contrary to the ancient usages and forms, and would recognize none.

The former constitution being thus destroyed by the British legislature, and the people refusing to acknowledge that which was substituted in its room,



a dissolution of all government necessarily ensued. If the adherents to the British measures promised themselves any advantages from this apparent state of anarchy, they were greatly deceived. The resolution to oppose the designs of Great Britain, produced occasionally some commotions; but no other consequences followed this defect of government; peace and good order remained every where throughout the Province, and the people demeaned themselves with as much regularity, as if the laws still continued in their full and formal vigour.

The truth was, that the people, as well as their rulers, looked upon their character and reputation to be deeply concerned on this occasion. They were convinced it behoved them to give the world indisputable proof that their disposition was by no means unruly; and that far from being inclined to riot and licentiousness, they could preserve the public peace, and retain their usual sobriety and decency of behaviour, without any other restraint than that of their own habits and inclinations.

In this seeming cessation of rule and government, they displayed, in fact, the most implicit readiness to comply with every injunction of their leaders. Conformably to their views, whilst they carefully abstained from rushing openly to extremities, they were indefatigably taken up with every preparation for war: arms were provided, and ammunition procured by all individuals who could use them, and heavy denunciations of revenge made against those who should oppose their intentions.

Upon receiving information of these preparations, General Gage thought it necessary to fortify the neck of land already mentioned, in order to guard the town from any sudden surprize. This excited fresh discontents, and afforded ample cause of complaint: It was represented as a commencement of hostilities, and as an undeniable evidence of the design so long suspected,



suspected, to render the military absolute masters wherever they should be stationed.

Their complaints were so loud on this occasion, that fearing they might proceed farther, the General, by way of precaution against all accidents of this kind, took the resolution of seizing the powder, and other military stores, lodged in the Provincial magazines at Cambridge and Charlestown. This step appeared the more prudent, as the time was now approaching for the annual muster of the militia, when it was apprehended, that if any hostile designs were in agitation, this would certainly be the season for executing them.

It is not improbable that such was the intention of the people of Massachusetts. The resentment and indignation universally expressed at his conduct, and the violent measures immediately proposed, seemed to be dictated by disappointment, and manifested a concerted readiness to proceed to extremities on the first opportunity. With difficulty were they prevented by such as had the most influence over them, from marching to Boston, and threatening to attack the troops, unless the stores that had been seized were immediately returned.

But though retarded for the present, their revenge was fully determined upon. Not only Massachusetts, but all New England, concurred in this determination. To impress the military at Boston with a due persuasion that no excesses on their part would be attended with impunity, an alarm was spread that they were engaged in actual fight with the towns-people; this report brought instantly thousands together, who proceeded towards Boston with the utmost speed, and made no halt till they had full certainty that the report was premature.

In Boston itself, where the military were absolute, open defiance was bid to the Governor himself. The company of cadets that used to attend



Provincial Governors on ceremonial occasions, disbanded themselves, and returned him the standard he had, as usual, presented them with on his accession to the government. This slight was the more felt and mortifying, as this body consisted wholly of young gentlemen of fortune and fashion, and of families hitherto reputed to be attached to the British interest.

This public renunciation of all further connection with the Governor, by so respectable a corps, was by discerning people considered as an evil presage. It had been chiefly occasioned by his depriving their Colonel of his commission.—This was the celebrated Mr. Hancock, a gentleman whose interest and influence were very extensive, and whose character was extremely popular. By disobliging him in this manner, he raised himself an enemy, whose popularity did not fail to create him a multitude of others.

Another instance of the like nature happened at the same time. A colonel in the Provincial militia having accepted a seat in the new council, twenty-four officers of his regiment resigned their commissions in one day.

From these specimens of the temper of the Americans, it was easy to prognosticate what consequences would infallibly result from their inveteracy.

During these proceedings, the towns in the neighbourhood of Boston appointed a meeting of their principal inhabitants, wherein they agreed to refuse all obedience to the late acts of the British Parliament, and engaged to indemnify all persons who should be prosecuted for disobedience to the courts, and the other powers established by them: they declared all members of the new council violators of the duty they owed to their country, and warned



warned them to resign their posts, under the penalty of being treated as public enemies.

They exhorted the people, at the same time, to perfect themselves in military discipline, and to assemble once a week for that purpose. They advised them to be perpetually on their guard against the designs of their enemies; who, it was said, had determined to seize upon those among them who had most signalized themselves by their opposition to the tyrannical measures of the British ministry. Should such an attempt be made, they were directed to resist it; and if it should succeed, to seize, in their turn, every officer they could find, and detain them till their own friends were restored to liberty.

They recommended to the receivers of the public revenue, not to deliver it to the treasurer, but to retain it in their own hands, till the constitution of the Province was restored, or a Provincial Congress should otherwise dispose of it.

After these, and several other admonitions, they concluded by entreating the people to continue in such a firm, unanimous opposition to their enemies, as might convince them that all their endeavours to oppress America would be vain; and that in so just and noble a cause, "the conduct of the Americans would be such as to merit the approbation of the wise, and the admiration of the brave and free of every age, and of every country."—Those were their words.

A remonstrance was next presented to the Governor against the fortifications carrying on at Boston. They herein informed him, that they intended by no means to commence hostilities with the British troops; but were at the same time equally resolved, through the Divine assistance, never to submit to the late oppressive acts. They complained of insulting behaviour from the military, and particu-



larly of the seizure of their military stores. They imputed to these causes the ferment now raging throughout the Provinces, and which nothing could lay but a total stop to such proceedings.

In order, if possible, to restore things to some degree of tranquility, the Council advised the Governor to call a General Assembly. The writs were issued accordingly; but the heats and animosities so widely prevailing, and the deficiency of a council through the resignation of so many of its members, induced him to countermand the writs by proclamation. But this latter measure was held illegal, and the Province elected its Deputies, who met at Salem; where, after waiting a day for the Governor, on his not appearing, they voted themselves into a Provincial Congress, and chose Mr. Hancock president.

A committee was immediately appointed to wait upon the Governor, and represent to him the necessity of taking the sense of the Colony upon the present critical situation of its affairs. They enumerated the grievances already specified, and requested him in the most solemn manner, to discontinue the works upon Boston neck.

The Governor's answer was, that no inimical intentions were meant by the proceedings of the British troops; self-defence only was proposed. He reminded the committee how ill it became them to complain of breach of charters, while in defiance of government, they continued to hold Assemblies not warranted by law.

But these expostulations and recriminations served only to increase suspicion and resentment on each side. As mutual good-will and confidence was entirely lost, whatever was done was considered in a sinister view; and imputations of the blackest nature were affixed to every measure reciprocally adopted.



So dangerous was the situation of all adherents to the British cause become, that they no longer dared to trust themselves out of Boston. This was the only place where they could remain in safety. The Commissioners of the Customs, and all their attendants, had removed thither from Salem. Thus government, administration of justice, and commerce were all equally at a stand.

Winter was now approaching. In order to prevent the altercations that might arise from the troops being quartered upon the inhabitants, the intention of the Governor was to erect barracks for the accommodation of the former. But this intention was frustrated by the select-men of Boston, who compelled the workmen to desist. Application was made to New York for a supply of carpenters to as little purpose; and it was with the extremest difficulty the troops were provided with winter lodgments.

He had no better success in his endeavours to procure winter covering for the soldiery. The merchants of New York, on being applied to, answered to a man, "That they would never supply any article for the benefit of men who were sent as enemies to their country."

This treatment of the military, tended not a little to increase their dislike of the inhabitants of Boston. These, on the other hand, conscious of this resentment, looked upon them as men who would give a loose to it on the first occasion that offered.—Thus hatred and mistrust increased reciprocally; and became the more violent and intense, from the necessity of stifling their appearance, and covering them with mutual protestations of good-will.

While both parties were thus keeping a watchful eye upon each other in Boston, the Province at large was making ready for those events which every one foresaw would take place the ensuing  
K 4 spring.



spring. Magazines of military stores were formed; people were trained to arms, and money was provided. All this was effected with the greater facility and willingness, as they under whose direction it was done, disclaimed all stile of authority, and addressed themselves to the people as their friends and advisers.

It was in vain for the Governor to issue a proclamation, warning individuals to pay no regard to the injunctions of men who acted in contravention to all law, by assuming such a degree of authority. The more he reprobated the illegality of such proceedings, the more they were convinced of their propriety, in the present circumstances of their affairs, and the less they were inclined to deviate from them.



## C H A P. VII.

*Congress at Philadelphia.*

1774.

**I**N the beginning of September the General Congress of all the Colonies met at Philadelphia according to appointment. It consisted of fifty-one delegates. An Assembly of this kind was an entire novelty in this hemisphere. Throughout the vast dominions possessed by Spain, no insurrections had happened worthy of being recorded: in those belonging to Portugal submission had always prevailed; and France had never found it a difficult task to govern her American possessions. It was reserved for Britain to afford the extraordinary spectacle of Colonies severing themselves from the parent state, and uniting against her in a regular and orderly resistance.

The peaceable obedience to the commands of their respective sovereigns in the Spanish, Portuguese, and French Colonies, is deducible from the nature of their domestic government. Accustomed in their own country to an implicit acquiescence in the dictates of the court, individuals who settled in foreign parts, carried with them those habits of compliance, which, like all others implanted by education, are always retained.

But the vast disparity of character formed by contrary habits, could not fail to produce very different effects in the Colonies founded by England. In temper, inclination, and pursuits, the English Colonists are the reverse of those subject to the foregoing nations.

This



This wide difference is accounted for by recurring to the disposition of the English themselves. Bred in the highest sentiments of freedom, they preserve and propagate them wherever they go. Hence in the numerous emigrations from England to America, that have taken place in the last and the present century, the spirit that was prevalent at the time they happened, always accompanied the emigrators. This accounts in particular for the passionate attachment to republican principles, that marks the character of the people in New England, whose forefathers were the most zealous adherents to that party which opposed monarchy with so much outrageousness and violence in the last century.

Fraught with the high spirited notions that characterise the British nation, it is not surprizing that the inhabitants of British America should feel the same repugnance to make any concession unfavourable to liberty, that is professed by the natives of this island; in which these glory, and which they consider not only as the most shining part of their character, but as the source of all those advantages they possess in a superior degree to other nations.

Another material cause may be assigned for the forwardness expressed by the people of New-England, in asserting every privilege to which they thought themselves entitled. This part of British America is chiefly peopled with white men; the proportion of blacks being no more than a twentieth. The lands are divided into small lots, each of them freeholds: this produces a numerous commonalty, who live in plenty, though not in luxury. An equality of circumstances places them on a footing of friendliness and mutual intercourse, that renders it dangerous to aim at innovations, or at too much authority over them.

A people



A people thus constituted, enjoy a weight and consequence unknown in countries where great quantities of land are in the possession of a few. Here the number to be bought or influenced being small, that business is much more easily accomplished, than where multitudes are to be consulted whose circumstances set them above necessity, and whose education renders them obstinately attached to the constitution of their country.

Long ago it was foreseen, that a time would come when the people of New-England would lay claim not only to freedom in its utmost extent, but to political independency. The principles they were brought up in, taught them justly to consider the first as their due; and the jealousy of incroachments upon it, would lead them to bear impatiently the dependence upon any power distinct from their own. Experience showed, that while unable to cast off such a yoke, they bore it even then with reluctance. It was no matter of astonishment, that thinking themselves able to resist it, they should refuse to bear it any longer.

That spirit of resistance of which Great Britain now so bitterly complained, was therefore the necessary and native growth of those Colonies which she had founded, fostered, and reared, with so much attention and care, to their present state of maturity. They felt the strength and importance to which they had attained, and were desirous to exercise it according to their own ideas.

They were now met altogether for the first time, in the persons of their delegates. After having for many years dwelt, as it were, separate from each other, and often differed about their various interests, they now laid aside all prepossessions and antipathies, and cordially agreed to unite their respective abilities of every kind, in opposition to the power and demands of Great Britain.

This



This was a scene that called up the attention of all Europe ; but especially of those states that had large possessions in America. They saw the beginning of a contest, the final issue of which might affect them in the most serious manner. Were the British Colonies to succeed in their attempt, so far as to place themselves on a footing of total independence upon Great Britain, this might prove a precedent of the most fatal tendency to their interest. It might induce their own Colonies to imitate those of England, in hopes of meeting with the like success.

Those powers, on the other hand, who had no Colonies, viewed with a secret satisfaction the embarrassments of a state whose might they dreaded and wished to see diminished.

The delegates were enjoined by the instructions they had received from their constituents, solemnly to acknowledge the sovereignty of Great Britain over them, and their willingness to pay her the fullest obedience, as far as the constitution authorised her to demand it : they were to disclaim all notions of separating from her ; and to declare it was with the deepest regret, they beheld a suspension of that confidence and affection which had so long, and so happily for both, subsisted between Great Britain and her Colonies.

But they were no less carefully directed, at the same time, to assert the rights transmitted to them by their ancestors. These rights they would never surrender, and would maintain them at all perils. They were entitled to all the privileges of British subjects, and would not yield to the unjust pretensions of Parliament, which, in the present treatment of the Colonies, had violated the principles of the constitution, and given them just occasion to be dissatisfied, and to rise in opposition. Parliament might depend this opposition would never cease,  
until



until those acts were wholly repealed that had been the radical cause of the present disturbances.

They were particularly instructed to preserve the utmost harmony in all their consultations, and to debate nothing with acrimony : whatever should be decided by a majority, the remainder should acquiesce in cheerfully. This majority was to be formed, not by numbering the delegates, but by allowing one vote to each Colony.

The temper and secrecy with which they conducted their proceedings, was the first object that struck discerning observers : it contributed powerfully to gain them the reverence and favour of the public, and to convince their constituents that they had intrusted their affairs to able hands.

Their first public act was a declaration approving and applauding the conduct of the people of Massachusetts, and encouraging them to proceed with the same spirit they had begun : they lamented the distresses of the people at Boston, and the oppression they suffered through the illegal and tyrannical acts of the British Parliament : they coincided with all the measures and resolutions taken and proposed by that Province, and recommended a generous contribution of supplies from all the Colonies, to enable their countrymen at Boston nobly to persevere in the struggle they were now making for the common cause.

They further declared, that if any attempt should be made to carry these acts into execution by force, all America should join to oppose it ; and that if, in the course of hostilities, the preservation of the inhabitants of Boston made their removal up the country necessary, all America should unite to indemnify them for the losses and detriment they might incur on that account.

They next wrote a letter to General Gage, in which, after repeating the grievances complained of



of by the people of Massachusetts, much in their own terms, they informed him of the unanimous resolution taken by the Americans to oppose, with their united endeavours, the acts lately passed by the British Parliament; and that to this intent the Colonies had appointed them the guardians of their liberties. They entreated him, in the same manner the people of his government had done, to desist from any military operations, as tending to breed ill blood, and occasion, at last, hostilities, which might frustrate the pacific disposition of the Congress, and render a reconciliation with the parent state a work of great difficulty.

This letter was followed by a public declaration of the rights belonging to the British Colonies. Herein they again asserted their title to every privilege enjoyed by Englishmen. They particularly stated, that as the distance of the Colonies from Britain made a representation of them in the British Parliament inconvenient and impracticable, their Provincial Assemblies ought exclusively to possess the powers of legislation, as the only legal representatives of the people, by whom they are chosen. These, conjointly with the Governor appointed by the King, being constitutionally the only lawful rulers in each Province.

In order, however, to preserve the connection between Great Britain and her Colonies unimpaired, they consented to pay due submission to such acts of the British Parliament as are avowedly and evidently calculated for the meer regulation of commerce, and to secure the benefits of the American trade to the parent state; but without empowering her to impose any tax whatsoever for the purpose of raising a revenue in America without their consent.

They reprobated the idea of being tried for offences any where but at home, by juries chosen  
among



among their neighbours. They claimed all the immunities granted to them at any time by royal charters, or secured to them by law : they declared the keeping of an armed force in any Colony during peace, against its consent, illegal ; and that a council invested with legislative powers, and appointed by the Crown during pleasure, was contrary to the spirit of the constitution, and subversive of freedom.

They insisted on these rights as inalienable, and in the lawful power of none to deprive them of. They were founded on the clearest natural justice, and could not reasonably be called in question.

They enumerated those acts of Parliament by which they thought themselves illegally aggrieved, and of which they declared the repeal indispensibly necessary for the restoration of harmony between Great Britain and America. Among these was that relating to Quebec, which they explicitly termed “ An Act for establishing the Roman Catholic religion in Canada ; abolishing the equitable system of English laws, and erecting a tyranny there.” This act, they said, was peculiarly hostile to the Colonies, from the dissimilitude between the religion, laws, and government, established among the Canadians, and those of the Colonists. The French in that Province had not forgotten the enmity formerly subsisting between them and the English Colonies, and that it was by the assistance of these, they had been torn from the dominion of France.

They then declared, that to obviate in the most effectual manner the evils impending upon them, through the unjustifiable measures of the British ministry, it would be proper to frame a body of regulations against the importation and consumption of English goods, until those acts were repealed that imposed duties upon tea, wine, coffee, sugar, and



and molasses imported into America, together with the Boston port act, those for altering the charter of Massachusetts, and the administration of justice in that Colony, and that relating to Quebec.

The regulations against importing or using any articles coming from Britain, were much the same that had been adopted on former occasions, and have been already specified: the principal difference was, that they were now enacted in a more formal manner, and recommended with more earnestness and solemnity.

They did not forget to return the warm thanks of America to those members of Parliament who had so zealously, though ineffectually, espoused its cause; as well as to those numerous individuals in England, that had stood up in its defence in their speeches or writings.

Their next business was to draw up a petition to the King, an address to the British nation, another to the Colonies, and a third to the French inhabitants of Canada.

In their petition to the King, they complained in particular of a military commander in chief being appointed Governor of a Colony during peace; an armed force employed to compel the payment of taxes; new offices created and attended with much expence and oppression; salaries and fees in the Courts of Admiralty payable out of the effects condemned; Custom-house officers authorised to force entrance into houses without permission from the civil magistrate; heavy forfeitures for light offences; false informers exempted from indemnifying the parties accused; unreasonable security demanded for these when defending their right.

After dwelling upon these, and the various instances repeatedly mentioned as objects of complaint amongst the Americans, they declared their attachment to the parent state, their fidelity to the Crown,  
and



and affection to the King's person and family, with a more remarkable warmth and energy of expression than had hitherto been used on such occasions. They entreated him, for the sake of his people and himself, to adhere to those principles that seated his royal ancestors on the British Throne; and that as the common sovereign of all his subjects, he would impartially consider them as "connected by  
" the same bonds of law, loyalty, faith, and blood,  
" though dwelling in various countries; and not  
" suffer the relation formed by these ties, to be further violated, in uncertain expectation of effects,  
" which, if attained, never can compensate for the  
" calamities through which they must be gained."

They imputed the discontents, ill blood, and disturbances in America, to the ill-advised system of government that had of late years prevailed amongst them. to this alone they ascribed all the misfortunes that had happened. Before the prosecution of this plan, universal tranquility and satisfaction reigned throughout the Colonies. They did not petition, said they, for new grants or favours; they asked only for peace and freedom.

As this petition was looked upon as a solemn act of homage to the Crown of Great Britain, and specified in a manner the terms and conditions of their allegiance, it was worded with great care and circumspection, and was subscribed by every member of the Congress.

Their address to the British nation contained the highest encomiums on the common ancestors of the people of Britain and of America. It asserted all the rights of freemen as common to both, and declared their irrevocable resolution to surrender them upon no consideration.

After enumerating the grievances already expressed, they described the felicity of former times, when, united in friendship as well as interest, Great



Britain and America combated side by side for their mutual prosperity and grandeur. They recalled the zeal shown in their Assemblies to second the efforts of Britain, during the last successful war, and how materially they had contributed to the victories obtained by the British arms. What motives, said they, could influence Britain, after such proofs of fidelity and attachment, to change her conduct towards the Colonies in so injurious a manner, and to load them with exactions unprecedented and unconstitutional, tending only to augment ministerial power, and to diminish that of Parliament?

They stated those acts of Parliament which they had so often complained of as inimical to American liberty, and pointed out the result of that implicit subjection, of which they were intended to be the means. They represented the necessary consequences to England of persisting in the measures adopted to subdue America; the enormous expences she must incur, depressed as she is already by the immense weight of her debts and taxes; the infallible loss of the vast trade to her Colonies, while engaged in hostilities against them, and the prodigious diminution thereby of her resources to accomplish that fatal scheme.

But were Britain, said they, to be victorious in the contest, what would be her emoluments? Soon would she perceive that she had not conquered for herself, and would speedily have cause to lament her triumphs, when she found upon whose brows the laurels were to be worn. In a word, said they, to subdue the Colonies, would be to destroy the freedom of Britain in the plains of America.

Flushed with the power and influence accruing from the success of such an attempt, the strength of ministry would then become irresistible; and, aided by the weight of America, would bear down all opposition. Soon would some bold and enterprizing



ing statesman arise to put an end to the boasted liberties of England. Should the English prove as refractory on such an occasion as the Colonies are at present; should they deny him men and money for such a purpose, American arms and treasures would supply the deficiency. Nor should the English wonder, that after making slaves of the Colonists, they should co-operate in making slaves of them.

They ought not, therefore, said they, to be accused of sedition, impatience of rule, and aiming at independency. All that could be charged to them, was an inflexible determination to preserve their freedom, and to resist oppression at all risks. In the defence of their just rights they would go all lengths; and if in defiance of the laws and constitution of England, and the dictates of humanity, the British ministry should draw the sword in so iniquitous a cause, it will find the Americans fully resolved “never to submit to be hewers of wood, or “drawers of water for any ministry or nation in “the world.”

It was with great sorrow they asserted, that the criticalness of their situation compelled them to embrace any measure that might affect the immediate interest of individuals in Britain. This alone induced them to suspend the commercial intercourse between the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, and those of the Colonies. In this, however, they were warranted by the great law of self-defence; and no less, to their grief, by the indolence with which the British nation suffered the ministerial schemes to take their course in respect of America; but particularly by the treatment now experienced by the town of Boston.

As the destruction of the commerce of that city might be a prelude to the future destruction of that of all the Colonies, “we will endeavour therefore, “added they, to live without trade, and recur,



“ for subsistence, to the fertility and bounty of our  
 “ native soil, which will afford us all the necessa-  
 “ ries, and some of the conveniencies of life.”

They concluded by a general appeal to the equity and generosity of the British nation, and by expressing their hope that a Parliament would arise, whose honesty, wisdom, and resolution, would restore the good understanding between Great Britain and America, and lay a permanent foundation for subsequent harmony between them, upon fair and constitutional principles.

It may not be amiss to remark, that in this celebrated address, a proposal was made of a conciliatory nature; and which, the opponents to ministry complained, had not met with the notice it deserved. “ Place us, said they, in the same situation  
 “ that we were at the close of the last war, and our  
 “ former harmony will be restored.” \*

Their next address was to the Colonies. They informed them, that after having weighed, with the utmost impartiality and attention, the conduct reciprocally observed towards each other by Great Britain and America, since the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-four, when the present unhappy quarrels had their first commencement, truth obliged them to declare, that “ it is clear, beyond  
 “ a doubt, that a resolution is formed, and now  
 “ carrying into execution, to extinguish the free-  
 “ dom of the Colonies, by subjecting them to a  
 “ despotic government.”

They represented the hostile treatment of the town of Boston, and the Province of Massachusetts, as part of the system concerted against the Colonies: these were not less guilty of opposition to Britain than Massachusetts; but British policy aimed at disuniting them. It had to that intent selected, for the first trial, the most powerful, and the most likely, for that reason, to break out into some act  
 of



of violence that might not meet with the concurrence of the other Colonies : this would afford a pretence for correcting that Province with a heavy hand, without the interference of the others, who might not, till it was too late, discover the impropriety, as well as the ingratitude of suffering it to be crushed in the very bud, as it were, of its exertions for the common cause.

Notwithstanding, they said, the behaviour of Britain, and the present circumstances of the Colonies, would justify more active measures than those they should recommend, yet in order to preserve consistency of character, and to make it evident to the world that nothing but extreme necessity should alter the passive disposition they had hitherto professed for the parent state, they judged it advisable still to continue that moderation and forbearance. Influenced by such motives, they had once more presented a loyal and affectionate address to the Throne, in hopes of obtaining its protection and assistance for the redress of their grievances. They had, with the same view, appealed to the British nation, and endeavoured, by awakening them to a sense of their own interests, to engage their interference and mediation in the behalf of their persecuted fellow subjects on this side of the Atlantic; warning them, at the same time, to beware of consequences, should matters be brought to extremities; for in that case they would find the Colonists prepared to meet them and to show themselves worthy of that liberty for which they were contending. This trial, however, they hoped would never take place : nothing should be wanting on their part to induce a sincere reconciliation : the reciprocation of benefits and services so long subsisting between them and the parent state ; the ties of consanguinity ; the remembrance of their common origin ; all these, they flattered themselves, would operate in



England as well as in America ; and it was their ardent wish, never to see the day, when, forgetful of all these motives to consider the Americans as their brethren, the English, by assuming the character of tyrants, should cut asunder the bonds that had so long, and so happily held them together.

It was to stave off that fatal day, they had resolved to abstain from all harsh measures ; but to mix firmness with lenity, they had, much against their inclination, come to the necessary determination of suspending all further commerce with Great Britain. This, though detrimental to its immediate interest, was not to be considered as an act of intentional unkindness : it rather showed them unwilling to do any thing that might be construed as an act of hostility, and heartily desirous of being thoroughly reconciled.

They concluded by reminding the Colonies, that they had not long to wait for the final option of the British nation, between friendship or enmity with America. They declare, however, “ that in the piety, generosity, and “ good sense of the English, they repose high confidence ; and cannot, upon a review of past events, “ be persuaded that they, the defenders of true religion, and the assertors of the rights of mankind, will take part against their affectionate Protestant brethren in the Colonies, in favour of “ the open enemies to these, and their own secret “ foes, whose intrigues, for several years past, have “ been wholly exercised in sapping the foundations “ of all civil and religious liberty.”

Their last address was directed to the French inhabitants of Canada. To these they stated the right they had acquired, upon becoming subjects to Great Britain, to enjoy all the advantages of the British constitution. The royal proclamation at the concluding of the last peace, had solemnly promised them a participation of these rights ; but as they  
had



had been withheld from them by ministerial artifice, in contempt of public faith and express stipulations; and as the Canadians from their education, and long acquiescence in a very different form of government, were total strangers to the superior excellence of that to which they were now entitled, the Congress thought it just they should at present be made acquainted with it.

To show that this superiority did not exist merely in their own assertions, a variety of those benefits were cited in confirmation of it, that so conspicuously distinguish the government of Great Britain from that of all other countries. It was under the protection and influence of the English constitution, the Colonies had prospered so conspicuously, and were now become so populous and powerful.

They then adverted to the Quebec act, which they represented as calculated to establish the most rigorous despotism. It took away all shadow of power from the people and lodged it entirely in the hands of men who were wholly at the disposal of the Crown. What name could be given to such a government, but that of absolute and arbitrary in the extremest degree? It was insinuated upon this occasion, that whatever tyranny they might formerly have experienced while under the dominion of France, they had certainly made a much worse exchange by becoming subject to England. The French were their countrymen, and would, from that motive, be prompted to treat them with some degree of lenity; but no reason of that kind subsisted at present, to shield them from the ill treatment of ministers who were aliens to them, and of a nation at all times the professed enemy of their own. These would continually suspect them of harbouring designs unfavourable to their interest, and of perpetually watching for an opportunity of

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return.



returning to their old masters. Though this insinuation was not contained in the address, it was carefully conveyed to them, at the time, in a manner no less effectual.

Upon so critical an emergency, they invited them, in the warmest terms, to join with the English Colonies, as the surest means to secure themselves from ill usage and oppression. In order to work the greater impression upon their minds, they referred them, on this occasion, to the wisdom and authority of their own countryman, the great Montesquieu, a name venerated by all Europe.

What advice, to use their own words, would that truly illustrious man, that advocate of freedom and humanity, give you, was he now living, and knew that we, your numerous and powerful neighbours, animated by a just love of our invaded rights, and united by the indissoluble bonds of affection and interest, called upon you, by every obligation of regard for yourselves and your children, as we now do, to join us in our righteous contest, to make a common cause with us therein, and take a noble chance for emerging from a humiliating subjection under governors, intendants, and military tyrants, into the firm rank and condition of English freemen, whose custom it is, derived from their ancestors, to make those tremble who dare to think of making them slaves?

“ Would not this be the purport of his address?  
 “ Seize the opportunity presented to you by Providence itself. You have been conquered into  
 “ liberty, if you act as you ought. This work is  
 “ not of man. You are a small people compared  
 “ to those who, with open arms, invite you into a  
 “ fellowship. A moment’s reflection should convince you, which will be most for your interest  
 “ and happiness; to have all the rest of America  
 “ your unalterable friends, or your inveterate ene-  
 “ mies,



“ mies. From Nova Scotia to Georgia, every Co-  
 “ lony is now associated: Your Province is the  
 “ only link wanting to complete the bright and strong  
 “ chain of union. Nature has joined your country  
 “ to theirs; do you join your political interest.—  
 “ For their own sakes, they never will desert or  
 “ betray you. Be assured that the happiness of a  
 “ people inevitably depends upon their liberty, and  
 “ their spirit to assert it. The value and extent of  
 “ the advantages tendered to you are immense.—  
 “ Heaven grant you may not discover them to be  
 “ blessings after they have bid you an eternal  
 “ adieu!”

They next proceed to the article of religion;  
 and from the liberality of sentiments on this subject,  
 that now characterizes the French nation, they de-  
 clare themselves entirely confident, that no ob-  
 structions will arise to prevent a sincere amity.—  
 They appeal to the concord subsisting between the  
 Protestants and Roman Catholics in Switzerland, as  
 an illustrious proof of the benefits produced by such  
 an union.

They continue by exhorting them to beware of  
 those secret abettors of arbitrary measures among  
 themselves, who from private views of avarice or  
 ambition, may oppose the real interest of the Cana-  
 dians, and dissuade them from accepting the ad-  
 vantageous offers now laid before them. They in-  
 form them, that Congress has unanimously voted,  
 that it will consider the violation of their rights in  
 the same light as if it were levelled at those of  
 the English Colonies. They advise them to call a  
 Provincial Meeting, for the election of Delegates  
 to represent them in the next continental Congress;  
 and conclude by these solemn and remarkable  
 words:—“ It is our fervent prayer, that God may  
 “ incline your minds to approve our equitable and  
 “ necessary measures; to add yourselves to us; to  
 “ put



“ put your fate, whenever you suffer injuries which  
“ you are determined to oppose, not on the strength  
“ alone of your single Province, but on the con-  
“ solidated powers of North America.”

Such were, in part, the very words, and in general the sense and purport of the various addresses framed by the Congress in this critical juncture of affairs in America. The conduct and measures which they adopted and proposed, met with the universal concurrence and applause of their constituents. In no age or country was ever a greater confidence testified in its rulers, than the members of the American Congress experienced from their countrymen. This indeed was the natural consequence of the disposition the people were in from one end of the continent to the other. No parties or divisions prevailed among them: their unanimous accord against Great Britain, had silenced and put an end to all those lesser causes of contention that are common in all countries. The same spirit animated their leaders; there was but one voice among them,—that of opposition to Britain.

The meeting of this Assembly, and its proceedings, were now become an object of equal curiosity and importance in Europe. The political part of society was busied every where in forming opinions and passing judgments upon them; and individuals were solicitous in framing conjectures upon their issue, according to their respective wishes or fears.

But however they might differ in their sentiments concerning the justice of their cause, they all agreed that their measures were conducted with a wisdom and sagacity worthy of the most consummate politicians.

Nothing contributed more powerfully to impress people with a favourable opinion of their abilities than those public documents and addresses of which the summary has been given. The strength of  
language,



language, energy of thought, and powers of argument they displayed, convinced even those who were averse to their pretensions, that they were supported by men of spirit and capacity.

But beside these compositions, a variety of other publications were now daily arriving from America, which did the natives great honour. They manifested a vigour and comprehensiveness of mind, unfettered by modern effeminacy of thinking. They breathed those maxims of liberty, which in ancient times filled the Grecian republics with statesmen, patriots, and heroes.

The truth was, that the resistance of America was an object that struck the monarchical states of Europe with admiration and astonishment. Accustomed to obey with implicit veneration the royal mandates of their respective sovereigns, it could hardly enter into their conceptions, that any subjects of so great and potent a Prince as the King of Great Britain, would dare to disobey commands, emanating jointly from his authority, and that of the British Parliament: their concurrence seemed to constitute a weight able to crush at once all opposition.

This opinion arose from the limited sphere of ideas, wherein the principles of education prevalent in European monarchies, have circumscribed the thoughts of mankind. It may even be said, that no nations in Europe, the British excepted, dare carry reflection much beyond what they are taught by their rulers,

Hence proceeds a disposition easy to manage; and which, when occasionally provoked to break out into murmurs and discontent, is soon apt to return to submission, on the appearance of coercive measures to reduce them to obedience. While threats only are employed for this purpose, they may keep aloof, and threaten resistance; but when  
they



they see the arm of power lifted against them, their spirits fail, and they tremble to face the coming storm.

They who wondered at the daringnefs of the Americans, did not reflect, that their position was precisely fuch as will always induce men to act in the fame manner. They were the descendants of the freeft people upon earth, whose notions they had imbibed, and whose privileges they claimed in their full eft extent, as their undoubted inheritance. Remote from the feat of power and corruption, they were not over-awed by the one, nor debilitated by the other.

Their immense diftance from the metropolis, had hitherto preferved them from the contagion of minifterial influence: few were the means of detaching individuals from the intereft of the public. The principal pofts and offices in the gift of government, were chiefly beftowed on the natives of Britain; and the inferior employments were neither numerous nor lucrative enough to purchafe many adherents. Thofe honorary diftinctions which birth and titles create, were hardly known among them: every man occupied the rank which his own induftry, or that of his fathers had procured him. This afforded every individual the profpect of rifing to importance through the exertion of his talents, and encouraged him, of courfe, to make a proper ufe of them. Hopes of this nature excited univerfal emulation, and produced a laborious and diligent race of men, full of projects for the making of their fortunes, and not eafily difheartened by difficulties.

They were wealthy, but it was in the riches of nature. The voluptuous opulence of Europe had not yet reached them. Society might be faid to have juft attained the ftate of manhood among them. Their enjoyments were neither far fought, nor dearly purchafed; and left their minds and bodies  
unim-



unimpaired, and fit for the prosecutions of an active life.

The familiarity of pursuits and occupations among them, created a levelling spirit, which in the present posture of their affairs was of admirable service. It united them thoroughly in a cause, which was the more a common one, as they were all equally to partake of the benefit or detriment accruing from its success or failure.

They were at the same time remarkably fond of the ways and habits of life by long custom established among them. They did not wish for an introduction of those political systems, which by conferring imaginary excellence on particular classes, contribute only to estrange them in affection and interest from the rest of the community. Nothing sets this in a clearer light, than the readiness with which all America concurred at the very outset of its confederation, to provide against the future establishment of hereditary honours.

No few politicians both in Britain, and other countries in Europe, have taxed the British government with oversight, in not having long ago introduced such distinctions among the Americans. Titles of nobility create a natural attachment to the power that confers them: by drawing individuals nearer to the throne, and making them in some measure participate in its splendour, they procure it supporters in the day of need.

But whether such a measure would have much availed Great Britain in the present case, is a matter of doubt. No people are more attached to their country, nor to the life they lead in it, than the inhabitants of the English Colonies in North America. Like the native Indians dispersed throughout the immense tracts of that vast continent, they delight in personal independence, and seem to look on the boundless wilds and forests that surround them,



them, as retreats from oppression, should the iron hand of tyranny compel them to abandon their present mansions.

Inured from early years to the occupations and toils of a country life, they dwelt in the midst of rural plenty, and were totally unacquainted with ideal wants. Such being the condition of an infinite majority of the inhabitants, and the manners and inclinations of many of the most opulent, corresponding with theirs in a very considerable degree, they formed, altogether, a body of men too well affected towards each other, through that sympathy which arises from similitude of disposition, to have been easily disunited.

Experience has invariably shown, that no situation contributes more effectually to invigorate the human faculties, than that which is equally removed from the pressures of want, and the excess of affluence. Either of those extremities is fatal, by creating discouragement or indolence. Thus we see, that in countries where wealth is distributed in very unequal proportions, excessive wretchedness engenders sloth and indolence on the one hand, and that too much opulence produces dissipation and carelessness on the other.

This happy medium between poverty and riches, was the most desirable circumstance that could attend the Americans at this period. It approximated and cemented the great body of the people; it made them duly sensible of the strength and importance resulting from an equal diffusion of property, and inspired them with a resolution to maintain themselves in such a state.

The Americans, throughout the whole of this contest, entertained a very clear idea of their own situation, and of that of Great Britain. They stood prepared on their own ground, where plenty of resources were at hand: should not these prove sufficient



ficient to withstand the power of Britain, they well knew where others might be found. The jealousy of all Europe, of those states in particular whose enmity to Britain was natural and hereditary, was a fund from whence to derive supplies, which political inveteracy would render inexhaustible while the quarrel lasted.

The condition of Great Britain was the reverse in every respect. She was torn with divisions at home, that rendered one half of the nation an enemy to the other. The very subject of the dispute with America was the cause of endless contest. She had an immense ocean to cross before she arrived at the scene of action. The preparation and expence for so vast an enterprize, were necessarily prodigious. Add to this the avowed unwillingness in multitudes of those who were to draw the sword in this quarrel, and the divided opinions of the wisest men in the nation what plan of acting was the most eligible.

But independent of these difficulties, which were sufficient to alarm the most forward and confident, there was another of such magnitude, as seemed of itself to render the attempt impracticable. This was the critical situation of the public funds.—Great Britain was now at the eve of a war, that threatened to prove the most perilous and expensive of any she had waged for ages. Her resources, though great, were in evident danger of soon diminishing through its operations. The standing revenue was inadequate to the demands of the state on this occasion; and the fears of those who could alone advance the necessary supplies, were to be overcome by views of interest.

But even this powerful lure was considerably weakened by the reflection on the precarious state of the British finances. All Europe was astonished at the boldness of Britain in commencing a war so  
terrible



terrible in its appearances, when loaded with such enormous debts. It seemed utterly impossible for the nation to bear any additional weight; and political calculators were eager in predicting a national bankruptcy, in case Britain should persist in the hostile measures it had resolved.

The general opinion of Europe was decisively against these measures. They deemed it the height of impolicy in the English, to attack their Colonies, and carry their arms so far abroad, while their own affairs were in such disorder at home.

The Americans were loudly of this opinion. The resistance they threatened was greatly founded on the presumption that Britain was too much entangled with domestic difficulties to turn her attention to so great a distance.

Their arguments against the probability of such a conduct in the British ministry, were enforced with that warmth and impetuosity which characterized all their proceedings.

Is this a time, said they, for Britain to rush to war with her Colonies, whose wealth and strength constitute so great a part of her own, when surrounded by enemies wishing for her destruction, and that will undoubtedly contribute to accelerate it? To attack America, is in fact to attack herself. Such an enterprize, to say nothing of its injustice, is founded on folly, and must end in ruin: in losing America, Britain will lose a third of her dominions, her commerce, and her power. Neither will her losses terminate here. To spill the blood of the Americans, the best of her own must be shed. Her bravest soldiers and sailors must be sacrificed in this fatal quarrel. Her treasures will no less be profused, and all her resources strained to their utmost bearing. If she persist in this unrighteous quarrel, the day will certainly come, when her strength will be exhausted, her trade and manufactures



tures ruined, and her population diminished, when her revenues must unavoidably fail, her credit vanish, and her debts overwhelm her beyond any possibility of prevention.

Such was the general stile of the Americans when engaged on this subject. Fully persuaded of the rectitude of their notions, as well as the justice of their cause, they flattered themselves that the same ideas would be adopted in Britain, and preponderate at last over all motives of resentment.

In the mean time, they were zealously occupied in maintaining by dint of reasoning, the propriety of their conduct, and in impressing people with a conviction, that they acted upon the clearest and most unquestionable principle of natural equity.

Many were the apologies that appeared in their behalf at this time, not only in America and Britain, but in various other parts of Europe. They were circulated every where with great industry, and read with equal attention. They were considered as the plea of America before the bar of European wisdom; the light in which the Americans wished them to be viewed.

We are accused, said they, of disobedience to the British legislature, of ingratitude to our mother country, and of harbouring a long premeditated design of casting off all further acknowledgment of her sovereignty, and becoming our own masters. To this we answer, that we observe the British laws with the greatest fidelity; but that it is not conformable to the spirit and meaning of these laws, that any man should be subject to the government of those whom he has not, in some measure, consented to obey. In Britain, all people, if they have not a direct vote in the election of a Parliament, possess however many indirect means of opposing or favouring candidates. They reside on the spot, and whatever laws are enacted within the doors of Par-



liament, affect the members themselves, no less than the people at large.

This cannot be alledged in the case of the Americans. They live in a country three thousand miles distant from Britain. Acts of Parliament are therefore made by persons with whom they are totally unconnected, and over whom, of course, they can have no influence; whereas in England this influence is such, as often to constrain the Parliament to repeal acts that are unpopular. So different indeed is the situation of the Americans in this respect, that the more they are oppressed by the British legislature, the more it may become popular on this very account, from transferring to America burdens thought too oppressive in Britain.

Thus, continued they, our interests are brought into discussion by such as have no concern in supporting them. What other consequence can we expect, than that they will sacrifice them, without remorse or dread, to the conveniency of that community to which they belong?—It may happen, indeed, that a few generous and feeling individuals may befriend us, or that the opposers of ministry may from factious principles espouse our cause; but the voice of true patriots, we know from long experience, is soon drowned in a ministerial majority, whenever it proves displeasing; and we know as well, that the assistance of faction is not to be relied upon.

Is it reasonable then to blame us for taking our dearest interests into our own hands, especially as we do not by this forswear our allegiance to Britain? We leave her in possession of an immense proportion of authority over us. We make no laws without her consent, even in our domestic concerns. She appoints our Governors, and every officer of any consequence. She regulates our trade in every quarter of the globe. She declares war, and makes  
peace,



peace, without consulting us; and we are willing to fight her battles, and share in her good or evil fortune, without repining at the inferiority of our condition. Is not all this a sufficient acknowledgment of her sovereignty? and can she in honour or humanity claim any more?

The accusation of ingratitude is equally groundless. We have omitted no opportunity of testifying our attachment to Great Britain. In the occurrences of private life, we have always been forward to show how sincerely we cherished her remembrance. Of this let those natives of Britain bear witness, who visited or settled in America before the late disturbances: the civility, or, to speak with more propriety, the cordiality and affection they were treated with, amply proved our regard for the country from which they came; and we never could mention that country without emotion and rapture.

In public transactions our behaviour was the same. When did Britain engage in any contest, and find us backward to join her? Did we ever refuse her our treasures or our blood? Did we not rejoice at her successes, or mourn over her disasters, as much as if they were our own?

True it is our ancestors came from Britain; and she has cherished and protected America for a long course of years. But if cool unprejudiced reflection may be permitted, was it for us alone her cares were exerted? Did not the relation we bore demand her immediate support of America, for the preservation of herself? In the many wars wherein Great Britain has been engaged since the foundation of her Colonies, not one can be laid to their sole account: They were the joint concern of both.

In the mean time this protection has been amply repaid. The exclusive enjoyment of the whole



American trade, is a price which all the world will allow to be more than adequate for the benefits we have derived from Britain. But supposing it to be no more than what she has a right to expect, have we not, by paying it faithfully, acquitted ourselves of our debt, and acquired therefore the right, on our part, of calling ourselves an honest and punctual people.

The title of mother country is often pleaded in behalf of Britain. We admit the title;—we even glory in it; but we have not disgraced it: We have acted in such a manner as to convince the world, that we are worthy of being called her sons. We have obeyed her just and lawful commands; we have exerted ourselves to the utmost of our abilities for her interest and honour; we have submitted to heavy burdens to ease her; we have even patiently acquiesced in her will and pleasure, when we might justly have complained of her severity, but our affections got the better of our resentments, and we could not divest ourselves of the feelings of dutiful children, and loyal subjects.

But there is a term at which obedience ceases to be a duty or a virtue, and becomes servility and baseness: this term was hastened by the imperiousness of those who administered the affairs of Britain. Proud of her successes in a war in which she had triumphed over the two most potent monarchies in Europe, she confidently presumed that the dread of her power would obviate all ideas of disputing her commands, and that whatever she thought proper to enjoin would implicitly be complied with.

In this fatal presumption, she ventured to try the condescendence of America; forgetting that she had stretched it to its utmost bearing, and could not require more without assuming the character of a tyrant. But in an evil hour for Britain, her haughtiness overcame her prudence, and she over-leapt those bounds of authority which ought to have been held



held as sacred as those limits that fix the territorial rights of nations.

Such were the reasonings and arguments of the Americans in defence of their proceedings. The jealousy prevailing against Great Britain, gained them a favourable reception every where. They were read, approved, and admired with a kind of enthusiasm. One would have thought Europe was in alliance with that part of the world; and that Great Britain was an ambitious aggressor, whose iniquitous attempts ought to be resisted, and against whom it behoved all nations to unite.

These notions spread every where with astonishing rapidity. What contributed most powerfully to render them acceptable, was that several individuals of great eminence in political knowledge took up the pen in their recommendation. Britain was represented in the most injurious light: she was accused of designing not only a monopoly of trade, but an exclusive enjoyment of liberty, and as secretly determined to overturn all the obstructions formed by laws and equity, in the prosecution of that tyrannical scheme.

Among the various nations that espoused the cause of the Americans, none signalized themselves more than the French. They did it with the more warmth and vehemence, as the English nation was the principal object at which these were levelled.— They found or invented sufficient causes to irritate the Colonies; they set their imaginations on the rack to furnish them with pretexts for renouncing all further adherence to the parent state, by which they represented them to have been treated in a manner unworthy of the attachment they had so long, and so invariably testified for her; and that entirely absolved them of all obligation to remain any longer in her subjection.



It is no less remarkable than true, that the people of France, though passive under a form of government which is extremely oppressive, preserve a high sense of the value of political liberty, and express great respect for those nations that have been brave or wise enough to save themselves from that contagion of slavery, which has over-run almost all the continent of Europe.

So strong is their partiality to the cause of freedom, that when the French ministry, under the late King, undertook the conquest of Corsica, in virtue of the cession which the Republic of Genoa made of that island to France, the Corsicans had numerous partizans and well-wishers among the French, who scrupled not openly to extol the resolution of those islanders, and to speak of them as men who deserved a better fate than to be subdued by France, or submit to Genoa.

This spirit arose with double vigour on the commencement of the quarrel between Great Britain and America. The consciousness of the good-wishes of the Court to this latter, gave life to the national partiality in its favour, and emboldened people to speak and write their sentiments without restraint.

They did both with so much boldness and latitude of thought on the subject, that persons unacquainted with the situation of France, would have imagined from the various tracts they published on this occasion, that France was a country of perfect freedom, and the French a nation of republicans.

The truth is, that liberty is so truly the clear and incontestible right of mankind, that even they who have never possessed, nor expect ever to possess it, cannot help feeling its value, and the propriety of asserting it in all who have it in their power,

There is something so interesting in the idea of public freedom, that whenever a people take up arms either to defend or to recover it, they are sure



of meeting with the open countenance of all who dare bestow it, and with the secret good-wishes of all who fear to express them.

Men who are combating for freedom, are in some measure the champions of mankind: they fight, as it were, for the universal cause of society. This naturally engages the predilection of all who behold the strife. Tyrants, and their abettors, are necessary objects of hatred; we rejoice to see them overthrown; and though we should derive no immediate benefit from their fall, we yet partake of that which results to others, by the satisfaction we cannot help feeling at the defeat of injustice and oppression.

In the very countries that groan under the severest despotism, the public cannot be prevented from testifying its approbation of these successful efforts in vindication of the common rights of men. A sympathetic pleasure arises from them, which is communicated throughout all ranks and degrees.—It is a kind of revenge indirectly levelled at those who oppress them, and in which they indulge themselves the more readily, as they have no other way of expressing their resentment.

Another motive may be assigned for the contentment accruing from events of this nature. They hold up serious admonitions to arbitrary princes, and warn them to be moderate in the exercise of their power, lest they should, in their turn experience the wrath and indignation of an injured people. Conscious of this effect upon the minds of their rulers, nations view such events as the best of lessons to those who hold them in subjection.

To these causes may be ascribed the eagerness with which men have always sided with the oppressed. The Americans were reputed ill-used; this excited compassion: they were described at the same time as a resolute and brave people, determined to



resist oppression; this procured them esteem and respect, and raised them a multitude of adherents in all parts of Europe.

Before this period, the vast continent of North America was hardly known to most Europeans, but by its geographical position on the maps of the globe. They were totally ignorant that nations were silently rearing in that part of the world, which would one day dispute its possession with one of the greatest powers in Europe. The sudden disclosure of so vast a scene, struck all people with astonishment. It suspended their attention to all other objects: these became comparatively small, when set against those events which were now the subject of universal expectation.

The French, in particular, were longing to see the sword drawn by both parties. Both ministry and people concurred in this wish; the first in full hope of dismembering an empire of which they began to stand in the greatest dread; the second from popular antipathy, no less than natural impulse in favour of men who were represented as struggling against their oppressors.

From these causes France was more intent on the transactions now taking place in America, than any other power. She beheld with pleasure the probability of a most sanguinary contest between her ancient rival, and the Colonies which she had taken so much time to found and bring to maturity, and had protected at so vast an expence. She rejoiced to see the fruits of so much sagacity and care, the produce of near two centuries, on the point of being torn for ever from the hands that planted them. Her only apprehension was, that a sense of their mutual interests might reconcile the jarring parties, and prevent them from coming to those extremities into which her clandestine endeavours were now sedulously exerted to precipitate both.

The



The meeting of the American Congress opened the fairest prospect of realizing the sanguine expectations she had entertained, that America, confiding in her strength, would refuse to make the concessions demanded by Britain; and that neither of the contendants being in any disposition to yield, disputes would arise to such a height, as to render an appeal to force unavoidable.

Elated with these ideas, the French ministry viewed this meeting of the Congress as the first step to the great revolution they were looking for. The altercation, from being a difference of opinion begun and maintained by individuals, was gradually become a national quarrel of the most serious nature. It had already produced an effect of the last importance; it had united all America under one government: Britain had no longer a single Colony to contend with; she had them all to face under one denomination.

The difference between the language they held when a sunder, and the stile they now assumed, was manifest to every observing man. They did not, indeed, cast off at once all respect and submission; but their conceptions were bold beyond any former precedent, and their expressions were animated to a degree that bordered on defiance.

The deliberations of Congress, indeed, were attended with secrecy, and the daringness of their speeches was known only to those who were present: but the result of these deliberations proved in what a tone they had been conducted, and with what kind of spirit the members were actuated.

The unusual boldness and animation that accompanied all discourses and writings of private individuals, corresponded with the spiritedness of their leaders: it went even further. As they were not bound by formalities, they kept no measures in their invectives against the politics of Britain: they spoke



spoke like men who well foresaw the issue of the contest; and were not therefore apprehensive of the consequences of what they might speak or write.

The time is come, said they, to fix ourselves upon a stable ground. Let us at once know our destiny: freedom or slavery is now the question: shall we, a great, a numerous people, humbly submit to be ruled by another nation that has not conquered us, and that dwells in a different hemisphere? Let our courage first be tried, and victory decide between us. It were a shame for men to yield before such a decision.

What are the foundations upon which they erect a right of sovereignty over us? Is it on their superior virtue, or brighter capacity? The first they have candour enough not to presume upon: they frankly acknowledge themselves, and if they did not, we know them to be a corrupt and venal people in every thing relating to politics and government. With what a face can such a people claim the prerogative of governing a distant nation, not worse, if not better than themselves? What renders such a claim the more unreasonable, is the impossibility of their being acquainted with our condition so well as ourselves. A small number of those who compose their Parliament, are men of knowledge and experience; but the major part is made up of persons whose wealth only could have seated them there; and some of whom lie under the imputation of a bad character. Shall such an Assembly, chosen by a diminutive proportion of the people, whose votes are almost all purchased, and who themselves will sell their own to the highest bidder; shall such an Assembly arrogate the right of making laws for us, who are as knowing as themselves in general matters, and much more competent to the task of providing for our own welfare, without going three thousand miles to ask for advice?

Their



Their capacity we respect, indeed, much more than their virtue; but while it is continually prostituted, it is much more dangerous than mediocrity of talents accompanied by good intentions: these will go much farther in promoting the good of the community, than brightness of genius attended by a dubious character. But allowing their abilities to be ever so splendid, and even superior to our own, still we have capacity enough to manage our own concerns; and experience has shown it to a proverb, that every one is best conversant in his own affairs.

But why should we dissemble our sentiments on their conduct and intentions respecting America? They planted Colonies with no other view than to make them subservient to their own conveniency. While unable to exercise a will of our own, we yielded passively to their superior power; and they made the most of us accordingly. But we are no longer in that infant state of Colonisation, which obliged us to pay implicit obedience to their commands. While their behaviour to us is dictated by humanity, we shall gladly remember that we both originate from the same ancestors; but if they consider their possession of the land occupied by these in former ages, as a title to lord it over us, we are not so destitute of sense or spirit, as to admit of so unjust and groundless a claim. We are now arrived at a period of strength and maturity that forbids us to bend beneath a foreign yoke: it were a shame, if convinced of our own power and importance, we should tamely give ourselves up to the controul of another people.

Let not Britain, therefore, attribute it to petulance or disaffection, that we think ourselves authorised to assume the direction of our own affairs. We are willing, we are desirous to remain her everlasting friends, and fellow subjects to the monarch that wears



wears her crown ; but let her not deceive herself with a vain hope that we shall descend any lower.

But what hopes have we, on the other hand, that Britain will accept of these offers ? Fleets and armies are the means by which she evidently proposes to retain us in her bonds. Behold what is now transacting at Boston : this is a true earnest of the conduct she intends to hold with America.

What remains to be done in our situation, but manfully to face the dangers that threaten us ? When attacked with fire and sword, have we not a right to repel the assailants with the like weapons of destruction ?

The eyes of Englishmen are now upon us ; and numbers, perhaps the majority, do not wish to see us prostrate ourselves before the iron rod that is lifted over our heads. They would despise us for such cowardice, and deem us unworthy of the forefathers of whom we make such a boast.

Let us then rouse ourselves. Let us go forth and give our invaders the meeting. Let our tongues and our pens be silent, until our deeds have proved that we have spoken and written no more than what we dare to perform. Until this is done, Britain will not think that we deserve to be treated like Englishmen.

Such was the stile and manner of the numberless publications that appeared in America at this time.

What added, doubtless, considerably to the zeal thus manifested in the common cause, was the spirit exerted upon this occasion by the independent clergy. They faithfully adhered to the people ; and by their conduct and discourses, showed that they considered themselves as equally interested with the rest of the community, in maintaining its various claims.

There



There is probably no country upon earth where the inhabitants are more under the influence of their preachers than New-England. To speak with impartiality, they are usually men of irreproachable character, sincere and laborious in their vocation, and exemplary in their lives and manners.

Men of this description, many of whom were eminent for their learning and eloquence, were powerful assistants in spiriting up the people to co-operate with their leaders in resisting the designs of Britain, which were painted to them in all the colours of injustice and tyranny.

The discourses addressed to the people from the pulpits in New-England, made the greater impression, as they were unbought and flowed from principle. The cause of the public, from this method of supporting it, became more sacred and respectable. It created a kind of religious attachment, and inspired men with an enthusiastic courage to defend it.

The consequence was, that the inhabitants of New-England took up arms with the most conscientious persuasion of the justice and rectitude of doing it. They went to the field of battle, convinced that if they fell, it was in a cause that Heaven approved. Sentiments of this kind could not fail to produce intrepidity.

The Congress beheld with much satisfaction this universal disposition to coincide with the measures, which, it perceived, must soon be taken in the present circumstances. From the irresistible power of the British ministry, it clearly foresaw that the utmost efforts would be made to reduce America by force of arms. The resolutions adopted in the last session of Parliament, left no hopes of reconciliation otherwise than by complying with the acts it had lately passed, and which were the chief cause of the present fermentation throughout America.

That



That Assembly was duly aware of the dangers they must encounter in so arduous an undertaking as that of meeting regular troops in fight, flushed with former victories, and commanded by officers of tried valour and experience. But it relied, at the same time, on the nature of the country wherein the war would be waged; full of passes and defiles, intersected with numberless rivers and streams, and covered in so large a proportion with woods and hills. All these were powerful impediments to the motions of armies; and would render the superior discipline of the British forces much less formidable than it might at first appear.

In order not to be wanting to themselves in so critical an exigency, lists were carefully procured of the number of fencible men in every Colony, and of those especially who had served during the last war. As no more than twelve years had intervened since that period, near two thirds of those who had borne arms at that time, were still alive, if one may rely on the computation which allows two men out of three to be surviving at the expiration of ten years.

This examination of their resources for the military list, was far from unsatisfactory. During the progress of the preceding war, more than forty thousand Americans had taken the field in their successive turns: their standing complement was twenty-five thousand. Allowing for the various accidents concomitant on life, a fund still remained consisting of about twelve thousand men, who had seen actual service, and were well acquainted with the use of arms and military discipline.



## C H A P. VIII.

*Transactions in Great Britain relating to the Colonies.*

AFTER laying the foundation of the republican system, so long proposed by the leading men in America, and providing for an effectual resistance to the efforts of Great Britain, the Congress separated, after a session of near two months.

Intelligence of the meeting and transactions of this Assembly, speedily reached England; but notwithstanding their importance, they did not seem to occasion much alarm to the generality of people. That party which adhered to the views and resolutions of the ministry, placed so much confidence in their abilities, and in the measures which they had lately taken to bring the Americans to obedience, that they felt no apprehension on account of the bold proceedings of the Congress. They looked upon them as little more than the idle clamours of an unruly multitude, which the exertion of a proper spirit would quickly silence.

The other party, indeed, viewed these proceedings in a very different light. As they had from the commencement of the dispute taken upon them to predict an universal confederacy of America, and an obstinate resistance to the designs of Great Britain, they did not fail to point out to the world, how true and well-founded their prognostications had proved; and to warn people not to advance any further in a track that evidently was dangerous in the highest degree.

But the public had lost all patience on this subject. So much had been asserted and contradicted on both sides of the question, it was involved in so many doubts and uncertainties, that the bulk of the nation



tion began to drop its attention to American topics. One would have thought by the indifference with which they were treated, by far the greatest number, that they had resolved, as it were, to give themselves no further concern about them, until some event should happen of so serious a nature as to render them unquestionably of the utmost importance.

Such was the temper of the nation at large, 30th Nov. when a new Parliament met, which soon 1774. appeared to be no less disposed than the former, to adopt and pursue with vigour the ideas and views of the ministry respecting America.

The Royal speech informed them of the disobedient spirit still prevailing in Massachuset; that it was abetted by the other Colonies; that due measures had been taken to enforce the acts passed by the late Parliament; that an inviolable resolution had been embraced to maintain the supremacy of the British legislature in every part of the empire; and that in the support of so just a determination, no doubt was entertained of their warmest concurrence.

An address in conformity to the sentiments expressed in this speech, was voted by a prodigious majority. But they who were of a different opinion, exerted themselves on this occasion with uncommon vigour; and though born down by the weight of numbers, did not seem inclined to give up any part of the contest upon that account.

The refusal of their concurrence was founded on the necessity of a strict examination of what the preceding Parliament had done, before they ventured to give it their approbation. The restoration of tranquility in America, had been held out as a motive to gain approvers of the measures adopted in the concluding session of the last; it became, therefore, those who met in the first session of the present,



present, to examine how far the success of those measures corresponded with the motives from which they had been approved. But how different was the prospect from that which had been promised! Instead of that peaceable picture which ministry had drawn in such flattering colours, they beheld all America in flames; and it would require the skill of the ablest statesman to extinguish it.

To require them to give their sanction to the plans in agitation among ministers, was an attempt to impose upon their common sense and experience. It was inviting them to add fuel to a fire that was consuming one of the noblest monuments of British genius and industry.

America was now, it clearly appeared, to be devoted to ministerial vengeance, for having fully proved the incompetency of the schemes that were now in prosecution. With what presumption had its immediate fall been foretold, beneath the terrors awaiting the armaments that had been sent forth? But had any supplicating voice been heard among the Americans? Were they not, on the contrary, standing in a firm and compact array, prepared to meet our utmost wrath, and full of confidence in the justice of their cause.

It were imprudence in the extreme, with such a sight before them, to go forward without inquiring how far they were warranted in taking so serious a step. Speed was only advisable in the execution of designs maturely weighed; but no deliberation had preceded those of which ministry demanded their approbation.

Those designs had hitherto been attended with a kind of fatality. Whatever had been done in consequence of them, had invariably been productive of mischief. Was it consistent with prudence to persist in a system not one part of which had answered expectation?



The answer to these objections was, that the behaviour of America was so disrespectful, and even so threatening, that it would argue a total want of spirit to let it pass without notice. It was nugatory to say that the Americans were persuaded of the equity of their cause. This was an argument that might as justly be pleaded in justification of Great Britain. But who was, in such a contest, to decide of its rectitude or impropriety? If Britain ought not, had America a better title? The contest was now chiefly from that quarter. It began about the right of Great Britain to impose taxes upon America. In compliance with the wishes of America, Great Britain virtually relinquished this right, by repealing every money act saving one. That one was the least material of any; its produce was a meer trifle: it was excepted for no other reason than to preserve the honour of the nation: the Americans knew it; but nothing would satisfy the Americans; their pride and obstinacy disdained to feel for the honour of Britain: an unlimited submission to their demands, was the sole condition upon which they declared themselves willing to be reconciled.

In private quarrels, individuals that meant reconciliation, met each other half way: the party that refused was always considered as the most blamable. Now Britain had gone more than half this way; she had gone almost the whole; but America had not moved a single step from the ground upon which she stood at first: she seemed imperiously to wait for a total unreserved acquiescence in her desires on the part of Britain.

This was a faithful portraiture of the respective position of the two contendants. Would any man that wished well to the reputation of Britain, require that she should humbly submit to the dictates of America? All had been done that could be expected by the friends of America: all had been sacrificed,



crified, the honour of Britain excepted: Heaven forbid that also should be given up to the haughtiness of the Americans. They alone had protracted the contest, by refusing all condescendance, while Britain made so many concessions. Such a dissimilitude of behaviour made it necessary for Britain to alter both her stile and conduct. She no longer exacted taxes from America; she demanded homage and respect; she felt herself insulted, and expected a reparation of her honour: she was not only the parent, but the protecting state; this gave her a superiority which incontestably empowered her to look for deference and condescension in her dependants.

The very nature of the dispute was totally changed. America having refused the most slender acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Britain, that could in the present circumstances have been required, was guilty of a wilful and daring affront, which merited a conspicuous chastisement. Were Britain to refrain from inflicting it, her spirit and her power would equally be questioned; and if she delayed it, the evil would accumulate by an increase of insolence on the part of the Colonies, and of contempt on that of the European nations, which had already testified their surprise at the patience and inaction of the British ministers, under such repeated provocations.

Such was the stile of the debates upon this address: they were equally spirited in both Houses; but it was carried in the House of Commons by two hundred and sixty-four, against seventy-three; and in the House of Lords by sixty-three to thirteen.

Such majorities decided at once the fate of all opposition to ministry; and the Americans had now full intimation given them, that they would meet with no more favour from the present Parliament than from the last.



But the firmness and perseverance of this opposition was not in the least diminished by the prospect of the numbers it would have to encounter. Small as it was in the Upper House, it produced a protest which concluded with these remarkable words: —“ Whatever may the mischievous designs, or the  
“ inconsiderate temerity which leads others to this  
“ desperate course, we wish to be known as persons  
“ who have ever disapproved of measures so pernicious in their past effects, and their future tendency; and who are not in haste, without inquiry or information, to commit ourselves in declarations which may precipitate our country  
“ into all the calamities of a civil war.”

The opposition in Parliament was in the mean time strongly seconded by the merchants of London and Bristol trading to America. As they were fully apprised of the consequences that must necessarily ensue from a perseverance in the hostile measures resolved upon with North America, and deeply interested in such an event, they exerted their whole influence to avert it. They prepared a representation of the distresses they would unavoidably suffer from such measures, and pointed out circumstantially the various detriments that would arise from them to the public, and how dearly the prosecution of them must be paid for.

This opposition was attended with another of no less weight and consequence. Mr. Pitt, now Lord Chatham, had for several years lived a retired life, remote from the busy scenes in which he had long acted so conspicuous a part. But his apprehensions of the danger impending on the state, now brought him again from his retreat. Though from several causes his popularity was diminished, and his power much lessened, yet the native dignity of his superior genius, and the remembrance of the illustrious part he had acted in the service of his country, could  
not



not fail to procure him attention and influence to which ever side he might seem to incline.

He appeared in the House of Lords on the first  
 20th Jan. day of their meeting after the Christ-  
 1775. mas recess. He began his speech by  
 a total dissent from the plan pursued in America by  
 the ministry, and moved for an address to the King,  
 immediately to recall the troops from Boston, as a  
 necessary step to all reconciliation. "An hour now  
 lost," said he, "in allaying the ferment in Ame-  
 rica, might produce years of calamity, as the situ-  
 ation of the troops rendered them and the Ameri-  
 cans continually liable to events which would cut  
 off the possibility of a reconciliation. By withdraw-  
 ing them, a proof of confidence and good will would  
 be given on our side, that would remove jealousy  
 and suspicion on the other. This was a preliminary  
 step of an indispensable nature, and which must be  
 taken previous to all others. It would be the set-  
 ting of our foot on the threshold of peace."

He animadverted in the severest terms upon the  
 conduct of ministry. He accused them of having  
 deceived the nation, by misrepresenting the situa-  
 tion of the Colonies, and by impressing people with  
 an idea, that the disputes and disturbances among  
 them were the affair of Boston only, in which the  
 rest were unconcerned, and which a single regiment  
 would suffice to quell. He pointedly reprobated  
 the whole system of acts and regulations lately pas-  
 sed respecting them. He contended not, he said,  
 for indulgence, but justice to America. If we con-  
 sulted our interest or our dignity, the first advances  
 to peace and concord should come from us; as con-  
 cession always comes with a better grace, and more  
 salutary effects, from a superior. He warned them  
 to retract in time, lest unfortunate accidents should  
 compel them to submit to the disgraceful necessity



of yielding through force, what they might have had the credit of granting through kindness.

He concluded a long and animated speech upon this important occasion, in the following bold and striking manner:—"If the ministers," said he, "thus persevere in misadvising and misleading the King, I will not say that they can alienate the affections of his subjects from his crown; but I will affirm they will make the crown not worth his wearing:—I will not say that the King is betrayed, but I will pronounce that the kingdom is undone."

But the efforts of Lord Chatham in favour of the Americans, availed them nothing. Coercion was now decisively resolved upon by the majority, and no other plan was allowed to be admissible. They renewed all the arguments tending to criminate America, and to justify the conduct of ministry. The time was now arrived, said they, for a final resolution not only to be taken, but enforced. Parliament is determined to be obeyed; America refuses obedience; what then but force can decide? To postpone coercion after so many threats, would be derogating from the national dignity. Delays in so urgent a business would defeat it without remedy, as the Americans were daily increasing their preparations and strength to encounter it. Years had elapsed since it had been the duty of Great Britain to employ her superiority of means in crushing this rebellious spirit: she had suffered it already to go too far. But if relying on the groundless hope that America might be reclaimed by other measures, she neglected those of compulsion, she would only render it a task of more difficulty to employ them successfully in future, as she would certainly find to her cost, that she must employ them at last, however unwilling, if she meant to retain any power over the Colonies.

After



After a violent contest, supported chiefly by a repetition of what had so frequently been urged, the motion was rejected by a majority of sixty-eight to eighteen.

In the mean time, the merchants and manufacturers throughout the kingdom, in imitation of those of London and Bristol, laid a variety of petitions before Parliament against the hostile projects of the ministry respecting America.

The treatment of these petitions was remarkable: they were highly displeasing to the people in power, as tending directly to defeat all the purposes they had so much at heart; but as they could not be rejected with a high hand, without adding considerably to the multitude who opposed the ministry, a committee was appointed to take them into consideration, which was not to take place till after a previous committee on the affairs of America.

The reason assigned for separating these two objects, was, that the consideration of commercial, ought not to interfere with political matters; each of these being sufficiently perplexing, without other embarrassment. While the attention of the House was taken up with the one, it ought not therefore to be distracted by the other: both together would puzzle and perplex; but asunder, would be discussed with much more ease and perspicuity.

But opposition would not admit of such a reasoning. To disunite politics from commerce, in treating of the business of America, were dividing, in a manner, the body from the soul. To what purpose should we concern ourselves about America, unless it were for the sake of commerce? But were it otherwise, there was no class of men whose correspondence assisted more in the illustration of political knowledge than that of merchants; they corresponded upon all subjects necessary for each others



information ; among these the political occurrences of the times constituted a principal part ; as according to these, they regulated their mercantile proceedings. To exclude the intelligence that must arise from blending commerce with politics, would therefore be extremely unwise, especially in a case where they were so intimately linked as in all that related to the British Colonies.

To defer the hearing of these petitions till the other committee had sat, was in effect to reject them. They were intended as reasons to influence that very committee against the proposals of ministry. The truth was, they were dreaded as the most formidable objections to these proposals, and were not, for that reason, to be permitted to enter the lists, till the enemy they were to combat, had moved off the field triumphantly, under pretence that no antagonist appeared to oppose them.

But the House of Commons was equally decisive for ministerial measures with the House of Lords. The question was carried in their favour by one hundred and ninety-seven, against eighty-one.

In consequence of this decision, the petitions that had been presented from London, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Norwich, Birmingham, Glasgow, and other commercial towns, were successively consigned to what was then humourously entitled the Committee of Oblivion.

But the merchants of London were determined not to give up a contest of so weighty a kind, without testifying to the world how much they thought the proceedings of administration were contrary to sound policy. They drew up a kind of protest, in which they asserted, that the connection between Great Britain and America was principally of a commercial nature, as the benefits derived from it to each were chiefly such. During a century, and more, the wisdom of Parliament had been perpetually



ally employed in encreasing and encouraging the trade carried on between them, as an object of the last importance. That the manifold regulations adopted for the mutual prosperity of the Colonies and the mother country, formed the great political chain that united them to each other. Questions of commerce and policy, wherein both are concerned, ought therefore never to be divided, but examined jointly, as composing a whole, of which the parts can never be well perceived, unless they are placed in one point of view.

This remonstrance was presented on the day appointed for the previous committee to take place.— It was warmly seconded by the opposition, who insisted on the indignity offered to so respectable a body as the merchants of London, in referring the petition to a mock examination. A direct refusal would have been less mortifying.

As to the pretence so strongly urged, that a discussion of commercial matters would create a delay in the prosecution of measures of more consequence, it was unjust and groundless. No measures could equitably be formed without such a discussion; and the time required for it would not be of sufficient length to invalidate any measures that might follow in consequence of so proper and necessary a discussion.

Such a proceeding, it was further alledged, was unparliamentary: it pre-supposed a knowledge and conviction in ministers that the question would be carried according to their wishes; this indeed was not surprizing: but what was truly intolerable, it took away the very forms that should be observed in transactions of this kind, and prevented those who had a clear right to it, from stating their objections to the measures that passed against their suffrages.

But the fact was, the ultimate decision of ministers was already taken; they were tired of hearing



so many speeches, of which they knew beforehand the inefficacy. War was now the word; and notwithstanding no weightier reason could be given for not attending to what the merchants had to say than this very determination, yet that was the very motive that impelled ministers to refuse them a hearing, lest these should make it appear how unwise it was to precipitate the nation into such a measure.

And yet in case of a war, whom were they bound to consult with more attention and deference than the mercantile classes, upon whom principally depends the arrangement of finances, and those pecuniary resources without which war cannot be waged. In whatever light therefore the point in question was considered, every motive concurred to induce the ministry to pay the most serious regard to the representations laid before them by so great a number of merchants from all parts of the kingdom.

In answer to the opposition, it was alledged, that faction had the principal hand in framing of the petitions so much recommended. The merchants had hitherto testified the fullest reliance on the discretion of Parliament; why should they seize an occasion of this kind to express their doubts of its willingness to consult their interests, and its ability to do it effectually?

The trade of Great Britain to America was in truth highly beneficial; but this was owing to the dependent situation of our Colonies: were they permitted to encroach on the superiority of Britain, and to break through the regulations that had been framed with so much care and sagacity to secure it, the advantages resulting from their commerce, would gradually diminish, and become undeserving of the sollicitude with which England had so invariably attended to the protection and welfare of her American dependencies.

Distant possessions required an equal mixture of lenity and firmness in the manner of governing them.



them. America, it could not be denied, had experienced hitherto, much more of the first than of the last. Presuming on its flourishing condition, and glorying in its strength, it now aimed at an abatement of that superiority on the side of Britain, which had been exercised ever since the foundation of her Colonies, without the least complaint or appearance of dissatisfaction. But should Britain relax of those rights she had so long maintained, and enjoyed without dispute, the merchants themselves would be the first to feel the consequences, and to arraign the imprudent indulgence of those ministers who should, from ill-founded motives of policy, comply with the unreasonable requests of the Colonists.

True it was, that war, and its concomitances, were a terrible object to behold; but they were sometimes necessary, to prevent greater evils.—What evil could befall a trading nation so much to be dreaded, as the loss of its commerce?—Was America to proceed in the course it had begun, a few years would suffice to set her free from all those restraints that render the possession of her valuable to Great Britain.

The chief of these restraints was the navigation act. But though the strict observance of this, and the several injunctions laid upon them, might wear the appearance of severity, yet they contributed to the reciprocal advantage of both parties, by encouraging the native produce of the Colonies, and enabling Britain not only to defend them with her arms, but to grant them immense sums of money in annual bounties upon every article of trade which they could either discover or improve.

It had been repeatedly demonstrated by fact, no less than by argument, that the interest of both Great Britain and America consisted in the preservation



vation of the commercial system so long established between them. By adhering to it, they had both prospered in a wonderful degree; and it might with great truth be added, that the proportion of that prosperity was evidently greater in every essential respect on the side of America, than on that of Great Britain. In proof of this, without entering into any further detail, let the respective condition of the commonalty be viewed in both countries, and and let an impartial observer decide which is the most enviable of the two.

The demands of the Americans were consequently ungenerous and ill-timed. They were fully conscious of the greater ease of circumstances attending the generality of individuals among them, and of the oppressive burdens with which they were loaded in Britain. They knew the exigencies of the parent state, and with what difficulty she bore up against the embarrassments that surrounded her. Was this therefore a season to cavil about requests not attended, perhaps, with all the formality which their pride exacted, but certainly founded upon the strictest necessity, and of which nothing could warrant the refusal.

Were that perpetual plea of the Americans sincere, —apprehension for their just rights and immunities, they would ere now have devised some expedient to assist Great Britain in such a method as might prove equally useful to her, and agreeable to their own ideas. But during a contest that had lasted now ten years, they had not made a single proposal. — This showed, beyond the power of contradiction, that it was not the manner of asking their assistance which displeased them, so much as the very matter itself. They were secretly determined to give none; and their whole study was to hide this determination, under the pretence of an illegality in the mode of applying to them for such purposes.

Were



Were concessions to be made until the Americans were entirely satisfied, would their warmest advocate stand up and name the last of their demands? They were indefinite; and, in truth, aimed at a total repeal of whatever might seem obnoxious to their immediate interest. But that and their real interest differed greatly. A deprivation of the commercial and political support they derived from Great Britain, would be the greatest unhappiness that could befall them. But this they must submit to, if they should ever succeed in the pursuit of that delusive phantom of independence of all controul from Britain, which was so erroneously represented as the happiest situation they could attain.

Concessions, in short, were not the true method of reclaiming the Americans. They might appear such to the mercantile classes, from the facility of making them, and the speed with which tranquility would be restored. But how long would this tranquility remain unshaken? No longer than till the merchants of Great Britain had found how much their interest would suffer from the consequences of those concessions. This would quickly be discovered, when, unfettered by regulations, the Colonies received the produce of other countries, and carried their own wherever they thought proper. This was the point they incontestably aimed at, however they might pretend to the contrary. Notwithstanding their boast of the vast business transacted with Great Britain, it was well known to arise from the prodigious credit they were indulged with here, and could not expect elsewhere.

True it was, that some years might elapse before these evils would be discovered; but they would infallibly arrive, and their progress, though silent and unnoticed at first, would nevertheless be steady and progressive, until they became so powerful



ful as not to be remedied. Now therefore was the season to obviate them, before they had taken too deep a root, and while the strength of Britain was adequate to their eradication.

Considerations of less importance had often put arms into the hands of Britain : why should she hesitate in a case like the present, where honour and interest unitedly call upon her for the most speedy and vigorous exertions ? The merchants were wont heretofore to second the wishes of the ministry, instead of opposing them : if they were alarmed at the suspension of those profits accruing from commerce, it was an inconvenience to which they had frequently submitted : their enemies would experience as many, if not more ; and it were unworthy of the character they had so long sustained, to yield to indignities for the sake of profit.

But the losses in present contemplation were nothing in comparison to those that would follow in future, should Britain, from a spiritless fondness for temporary quiet, give up tamely those advantages that would insue from a resolute maintenance of her just rights. This was a policy hitherto unknown in this country, where, instead of hesitation and backwardness, her councils had always been noted for the ardour and celerity with which they were inspired, whenever the cause of the public was in agitation.

These were the scope and purport of the numberless arguments that filled both the Parliament and the nation. But such was the heat and violence of parties at this juncture, that arguments alone did not suffice to exhale it. All bounds of decency were overleaped in this unfortunate contention. Scurrility and invective were substituted in lieu of reasoning ; and animosity superceded all the rules of civility and decorum.

Never did ministry and opposition engage with so much warmth as on the present occasion. The latter, who



who felt how light they were in the scale of power, exerted all their eloquence and abilities in order to render their antagonists odious. They represented them as incapable, neglectful, and inconsistent; and the acts framed under their auspices, as the offspring of false information and ignorance. They were threatened with a severe vengeance, when the day should come, as it must at last, that the nation would open its eyes to the iniquity of their administration.

The last Parliament was described as deeply participating of their guilt; and no language was spared in drawing it in the most defamatory colours. Among a variety of charges, one in particular specified, that it began its political life with a violation of the sacred right of election in the case of Middlesex, that it died in the act of Popery, by establishing the Romish religion in Canada, and had left a rebellion in America, as a legacy to the nation.

The final conclusion of this scene of altercation and inveteracy was, that the motion in favour of the merchants petition was rejected by a division of two hundred and fifty to eighty-nine.

But opposition was not alone in this day of trial. America seconded them strenuously in the persons of her agents, one of whom, on this memorable occasion, was Doctor Franklin, whose genius and abilities had, at the time of the stamp act, been so successfully exerted in the service of his country.

These gentlemen presented a petition, originally addressed by the American Congress to the King, who had referred it to Parliament.

Hereupon a violent debate immediately arose. No petition, it was argued, could be received from the continental Congress. It was no legal body; and to admit of any hearing on their behalf, would be a sort of recognition of their legality. The general



neral Assemblies, and their agents, were the only lawful representatives of the Colonies : none else would be admitted.

The reply was, that no government subsisted in the Colonies. Popular commotions, acts of Parliament, and dissolutions, had severally put an end to it. It was now incumbent on Parliament to co-operate in restoring it. The Congress consisted of persons of great influence in America, who were highly desirous to prevent the continuation of the disorders : they deserved, therefore, to be heard, if not as a public body, at least as individuals of character. Petitions were the acknowledged right of subjects of all denominations ; and it would ill become the British Parliament to reject one that came recommended by so many motives to give it at least, a civil, if not a favourable reception.

It behoved Parliament in so dangerous a crisis as the present, to beware of treating petitions or petitioners with superciliousness : they ought, on the contrary, to be encouraged, as possibly the readiest, and, indeed, now the only means of preventing infinite mischiefs. These mischiefs were evidently impending, and would fall heavily and speedily on Britain and America, if not prevented with the utmost diligence.

Parliament ought to rejoice at the humility adopted by Congress, and receive its addresses with the more readiness, as a refusal would cut off all means of communication with so respectable a body ; which, though not assembled according to the legal forms, was in fact the most powerful and important assembly at present in North America.

It ought to be duly remembered, that it was chiefly by rejecting petitions, America had been brought to its present condition of turbulence and confusion. This pointed out the necessity of acting



ing otherwise, unless it was resolved to accelerate rebellion. This would infallibly be produced by a refusal to attend to the present petition. It was the duty of Parliament to receive it, as the very intent of their sitting was to hear and redress the grievances of the subject.

After an ineffectual struggle, the American agents had the mortification of seeing the petition rejected by a majority of two hundred and eighteen to sixty-eight.

In the mean time a conciliatory plan was preparing by the Earl of Chatham. Preserving the undauntedness and perseverance of his character, he resolutely determined to exert his whole abilities in opposition to the hostile schemes proposed by ministry.

To this effect, he laid before the House of 1st. Feb. Lords a bill, the intent of which was 1775. to settle the troubles in America, and to assert, at the same time, the supreme legislative authority and superintending power of Great Britain over the Colonies.

He requested the House, in the most earnest and pathetic terms, sincerely to assist in so salutary a work ; to lay aside the prejudices of party, and to consider well the importance of the subject before them.

The contents of this famous bill were, a specific acknowledgment of the supremacy of the legislature, and the superintending power of the British Parliament. It declared that no taxes or charges should be levied in America but with the free consent of their Assemblies. It asserted a right in the Crown to keep and station a military force established by law, in any part of its dominions ; but declared, that it could not be lawfully employed to enforce implicit and illegal submission. It authorised the holding of



a Congress in order to recognize the supreme sovereignty of Great Britain over the Colonies, and to settle, at the same time, an annual revenue upon the Crown, disposable by Parliament, and applicable to the exigencies of the nation. On complying with these conditions, the acts complained of by Congress were to be suspended, with every other measure pointed out as a grievance; and the constitution of their governments to remain as settled by their charters.

But this bill, of which the illustrious framer had conceived so much hopes, met with the fate of every proposal that had been made in favour of America. It was opposed with universal violence, condemned without reserve, and pronounced at once totally inadmissible.

The reasons alledged for this immediate and entire condemnation, was its evident partiality to America, by the various concessions it enacted, and in particular by empowering the Colonies to assemble in Congress; a measure which, of all others, was the most offensive to the dignity of Great Britain, and most injurious to its interests.

The suspension of the acts to which they objected, was, in fact, a repeal. Were, for instance, the Admiralty Courts to be abrogated, what would become of the navigation act? The rebellious schemes of America were no secret: they pretended grievances; but meant, in reality, to put an end to all authority of Great Britain among them. It were the height of infatuation to think of concessions, with so many proofs of their antipathy to Britain. It was the business of every friend to his country, to combat their hostile disposition with undaunted firmness, and by no means to appear pliant and yielding while they assumed, in all their behaviour such an air of enmity and defiance.

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These assertions, it was urged, were not meer words called up for the purpose of a debate. They were prompted by matters of fact, and were unhappily but too well founded. While they were deliberating within these walls, the inhabitants of America had actually taken the field. They had attacked one of the King's garrisons, mastered it, and seized all the stores and ammunition for their own use, to be employed against Britain. Who could, after this, open his mouth in their defence or favour? They were no longer entitled to either.—They had now thrown off the mask, and shown themselves, what they were,—inveterate enemies to Britain.

From these causes it was moved, that the bill introduced as conciliatory, should be thrown out, in the very first instance. In this motion the ministerial party concurred without the least hesitation.—The circumstance above-mentioned of seizing a King's fort, contributed not a little to the warmth and hastiness with which the bill was rejected. Such conduct in the Americans was not unjustly looked upon as a commencement of hostilities.

But the spirit of Lord Chatham did not yield to the majority by which his plan was so completely defeated. He supported their attacks with all the fire of his former years, and defended it by a variety of reasonings.

While ministers, said he, represented America as in a state of rebellion, it behoved every man present to exercise his capacity for the quelling of it. No plan had hitherto appeared in that House for so necessary a purpose. To what could this be imputed, but to a negligence absolutely criminal in so arduous a situation of public affairs? When every exertion should be made to prevent the calamities that were so fast approaching; and that could not be ob-



viated by any other method so effectually, as by a plan of reconciliation. It was to invite ministers to embrace friendly measures, that he had employed himself in framing proposals of that tendency, which he adduced a multitude of reasons to prove, were the only effectual means to settle the peace of America upon a stable and permanent basis.

His opinion was supported by the concurrence of other Lords in the opposition. They contended that it was highly unreasonable to reject with so little discussion, a bill that tended to bring about a pacification so much wanted on both sides of the Atlantic. What would the Americans think, when they heard with what impetuosity all propositions of peace and amity with them were attacked by so respectable a body as the Peerage of Great Britain? Would they not instantly, and justly conclude, that all hopes of reconciliation were at an end, and that it only remained for them to prepare for war?

Allowing that the conduct of the Americans was highly blameable, and merited even chastisement, still if it were possible to avoid so harsh an extremity, without degrading the nation, would any prudent man declare himself an enemy to any measure by which so salutary an end could be accomplished? War could only be justified when the object proposed was not otherwise attainable.—If the Colonists could be induced to comply with such terms, as were reconcilable with the dignity of the parent state, as well as with their own views and wishes, would not this prove a most desirable event? Was it not therefore just and laudable to strive with all possible zeal to compass it, in preference to those projects that were founded upon coercion? These were a disgrace to humanity, and a resource which no good politician ever admitted  
into



into his thoughts, while the smallest hope remained of compromising differences upon any other footing.

It was further asserted, that ministry ought seriously to consider, whether America was the sole enemy that Great Britain would have to encounter, in case of her having recourse to arms for the decision of this unhappy quarrel. Though America was unequal to a trial of strength with Great Britain, were no other enemies to be apprehended? Would our ancient rivals stand still, when so fair an opportunity was offered them of returning the heavy blows we had given them so lately? It was vain to flatter ourselves the Americans would have no associates; the envy which the greatness and prosperity of this country had universally created, would operate on this occasion every where: they would find well-wishers and abettors at our very doors, and would soon meet with their open countenance or secret assistance. No man that professed himself the least conversant in historical knowledge, could deny the validity of these surmises. With such a prospect of sure and certain danger, was it eligible to proceed in the track that led directly to it? Did the situation of Great Britain warrant such a step?—Was she united in her sentiments concerning the justice and propriety of venturing upon a war?—Though a Parliamentary majority might approve it, would the nation at large join heart and hand in such a measure? The ministry ought to know that America had a number of partizans in Britain, who not only condemned the proceedings of the people in power, but even reprobated the principles upon which they were founded, and justified the resistance of the Colonies. People of this mind would always find means of obstructing, more or less, the designs carrying on against America; and might,

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though indirectly, prove more effectual supporters of its cause than ministers seemed aware. To dwell more particularly on this circumstance might not be advisable; but it should not be forgotten, that where a nation is so considerably divided in opinion, people should not be sanguine in their decisions, and ought, in common modesty, to allow the possibility of their being in error.

The ministerial party was not silenced by these objections. They were represented as far-fetched, and founded chiefly upon fears and apprehensions. Were men to hearken to these, no active measures could ever be taken. Danger and uncertainty was the lot of all human enterprizes; but were these a sufficient motive to refrain from acting, when called upon by just and valid reasons? Did it become Britain to be passive under affronts at this, more than any other time? Was it especially from her own subjects she ought to receive them without resentment? This was not a maxim ever inculcated in the school of sound policy: we are taught there, that without a proper spirit no state can flourish and command respect. But without adverting to general notions, why should we behave with more timidity towards our Colonies, than any other state that treated us with indignity? We had faced the greatest powers on earth fearlessly and successfully, and at a time when it was thought as much as now, that they would prove an over-match; but the courage and resources of Britain conquered all difficulties, and would conquer them again, if exerted with spirit, prudence, and fidelity: while we can depend upon these, we may safely bid defiance to all our enemies,

Much had been insisted upon the disunion prevailing at home; but was there no disunion in the Colonies? Were they to a man unanimous against Britain?



Britain? The contrary was well known. With cautiousness and management, a large proportion would remain faithful and active in our favour; and it would be our own fault if more did not side with us than with our adversaries. The means were still in our power;—firmness in our measures, and warmth in the cause of our friends and adherents.

The proffering of terms to America was vain and disgraceful. They had repeatedly declared against all others but those which they had dictated from the commencement of the dispute, and still insisted upon at this day. With a people so obstinate, and so wedded to their own ideas, no treaty could be had: we must either comply with their terms implicitly, or force them to accept our own. Of the two alternatives, which became it Britain to adopt, consistently with its honour? But after all the discussions and investigations that had perplexed Parliament in the course of this contest, was it not plain that America was weary of obedience to Great Britain? Was the question therefore any other, than whether Britain shall maintain her sovereignty, or relinquish it? No man, it was presumed, would rise up in that House, and move for a renunciation, on the part of Great Britain, of the dominion over America. If therefore it is to be retained, the sooner we convince the Americans of our ability to do it, the more spirit and consistency will appear in our councils, and the less we shall be suspected of being defective either in means to accomplish such a design, or in fortitude to undertake it.

The issue of this long debate resembled that of the preceding. It concluded in the entire overthrow of the motion made by the Earl of Chatham: the votes were sixty-one to thirty-two. So resolute was the majority in giving it an entire re-



jection, that it was not even permitted to remain upon the table : a severe mortification to a man who had made so splendid a figure, whose abilities had raised the nation to such a pitch of grandeur, and whose opinion and judgment had once been considered as the oracle of this country !

The determination to oppose all conciliatory measures was equally remarkable in the House of Commons. A petition was presented to it by the proprietors of estates in the West India islands, representing their alarm at the association of the American Colonies, and at their intended stoppage of all trade with the English islands. Should this be carried into execution, which it certainly would, if Parliament did not repeal the acts they complained of, the situation of the islands would become very calamitous.

The property of Britain in the West India islands amounted to more than thirty millions. A fund of several other millions was employed in this trade : it was of the most extensive nature ; all quarters of the globe were concerned in it ; the returns centered in Britain, and were an immense addition to its intrinsic opulence. The shipping was an object of still greater consideration, by the vast number of seamen which it constantly maintained.

But the West Indies, however wealthy, did not produce the necessaries of life in sufficient abundance for their inhabitants. Large importations were continually wanted, which North America was the only place to supply : were they to be cut off from a communication with that continent, they would shortly be reduced to the utmost distress.

This petition, however, did not alter the disposition of those who supported the ministry. They seemed resolved to treat all petitions as the contrivance of faction. The general ideas of those who  
approved



approved of coercive measures, was that however inconvenient, they ought not to be retarded by such a consideration. Hostilities were necessarily attended with a variety of disagreeable circumstances; but these ought nevertheless to be submitted to, sooner than put up with humiliations and disgraces; which, in the end, often detrimented a nation more than war itself.

In the mean time, it was become necessary to let the nation be fully apprized of the ultimate resolves of ministry respecting America. This was done in the House of Commons, by a long speech, wherein the present circumstances of affairs in America were detailed with great accuracy. The behaviour of the different Colonies was pointed out, and the conduct necessary to be observed with each. The universal fermentation prevailing among them, was asserted to proceed from unwarrantable arts and practices to dispose them against the ruling powers in Britain. It was asserted too, that notwithstanding all their complaints, the public charges borne by individuals in America, were, on the strictest computation, not more than one to fifty, when compared with what was paid by individuals in England.

So immense a disparity, removed at once all reasons for complaining. Nothing but a settled determination to quarrel with the parent state, could induce the Americans to persist in their disobedience to the lawful injunctions laid upon them, which were neither injudicious nor oppressive; but on the contrary, framed with all possible lenity, and counter-balanced by advantages which were not possessed by the inhabitants of Great Britain.

It was therefore a spirit of resistance that animated America, and not a discontent at oppressions, which it was plain did not exist. Upon this  
ground



ground the quarrel now stood ; and every measure now adopted should be founded upon that idea. This, in the ministers own words, “ was the great barrier which disunited both countries ; and on this ground alone of resistance and denial, he would raise every argument leading to the motion he intended to make for an address to the King, and for a conference with the Lords, that it might be the joint address of both Houses.”

The measures now proposed to the House, were to send a greater force to America, and to pass a temporary act, suspending all the foreign trade of the different Colonies of New England, and particularly the Newfoundland fishery, until they consented to acknowledge the supreme authority of the British legislature, pay obedience to the laws of this realm, and make a due submission to the King ; upon doing of which, these restrictions should be taken off, and their real grievances, upon making proper application, should be redressed.

The expressions of ministry were very clear and explicit upon this occasion, New England, they said, as most culpable, was justly singled out as an object of punishment. The other Colonies, as less faulty, would, it was hoped, be brought back with less compulsion. But “ the question now lay within a very narrow compass : it was simply, whether we would abandon all claims on the Colonies, and give up, at once, all the advantages arising from our sovereignty, and the commerce dependant on it ; or whether we should resort to the measures indispensably necessary to ensure both ?”

The address voted in consequence of the ministerial motion, fully coincided with all his views. It represented the Colony of Massachusetts to be in actual rebellion, and encouraged by the other Colonies. It declared the resolution of Parliament to  
maintain



maintain the supreme authority of the British legislature in every part of the King's dominions. It besought him to enforce this authority by the power constitutionally lodged in his hands; and assured him of their concurrence, at all hazards, to support him in the prosecution of such measures.

An address of this kind was in effect a declaration of war against America. It was considered as such by the opposition, and the consequences which it would have, were pointed out with the utmost freedom. Some, indeed, contended that the accusation of rebellion fixed upon the Province of Massachusetts, was false: the people there had done no more than what the constitution allowed: they had resisted arbitrary measures, after the examples that had so frequently been set them at home.

But whether they deserved to be stigmatized as rebels or not, such an appellation was dangerous, and might better be spared. It would only serve to aggravate, and render such as might think it levelled at them, desperate, and to inspire them with a determination to resist the efforts of Britain to the last drop of their blood, from the apprehension that their properties and lives were become forfeited.

The singling out of Massachusetts as most deserving of chastisement, would avail nothing. The other Colonies knew themselves as deep in the conspiracy, and expected, in their turn, no better treatment. To chastise one, was to chastise all. If Britain meant to assert her authority with a high hand, her preparations must take in all who were concerned against her; and not imagine that the reduction of one Colony would suffice. They were all formed into one body; and to defeat a part, would now put the rest more upon their guard. It was idle to aim at disuniting them; they knew their  
situation



situation too well to betray each other : it was equally nugatory to express more anger at one than at another : opprobrious epithets, or insidious blandishments, were lost upon them. Their conduct and language were equally open and unequivocal, and amounted to a clear determination to remain united in defence of their liberties, until such concessions were made on our part, as would fully quiet the apprehensions they entertained for their safety. Britain, therefore, must now consider, which of the two was the most advisable, peace or war ; not with one, but with all her Colonies.

It was replied by the ministerial party, that rebellious deeds constituted rebellion. The conduct of the people in Massachusetts could be viewed in no other light. They had, by open force, resisted the execution of the laws ; which in England, being reputed rebellion, cannot in America be called by another name. It was not intended to exercise any more severity than might be absolutely requisite. Mercy would be shown, and extended with the utmost liberality to all who submitted ; but it was highly necessary to make a strong discrimination between the deluded and the deluders. Policy and justice demanded these as victims for the good of the community ; on these alone the vengeance of Britain would fall.

High stress was laid upon the union of the Colonies ; but a little time would show with how much impropriety. When once they beheld the spirit of Britain thoroughly roused, they would soon retreat from the field of action, and humble themselves before her. They were associated upon principles that would not support them : the self-denying regulations upon which their confederacy was founded, were too hostile to the interest and feelings of individuals, to bind them long together.

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Impatience at such unnatural restraints, and private selfishness would break through them, and show how little they were acquainted with human nature who could rely upon so weak a foundation.

But there were also other motives to view with unconcern, and even with contempt this parade of union among the Colonies. The natives of America, it was said, had nothing of the soldier in them; they were averse to discipline, and incapable of military subordination: they were even of a fearful and spiritless disposition; sloathful, uncleanly, and of a constitution easily subdued by sickness and fatigue. These were not a people to face a British army. Small would be the force necessary to reduce them to obedience, and to put an end to all their projects of independence.

After a long and violent altercation, the question was carried for the address by a division of two hundred and ninety-six, to one hundred and six.

But the importance of the subject that had been debated was such, that the minority made a motion shortly after, to re-commit the address. It was argued that the consequences that would probably result from the prosecution of the measures it recommended, impelled them to solicit the House for a re-consideration of it: they appeared of such magnitude, that no time or attention could be misemployed in a fresh investigation.

A recapitulation followed of the dangers that would inevitably attend a war with America. The likelihood of other powers interfering, and the immense risks we should incur for the sake of an object far beneath such a terrible contention. Should Great Britain triumph over all opposition, what would prove her gains? No more than what she was substantially possessed of at that very hour: the emoluments



luments accruing from the commerce of America. But should fortune prove unpropitious, what would then be her situation? An answer to this question could not be made, without conveying a sensation of horror to every man that felt for his country. A motion, therefore, to re-commit an address of so serious a tendency, wherein, perhaps, the very existence of the British empire was involved, ought certainly to be received without hesitation by every man who professed impartiality and candour.

A long debate followed this motion, and was supported throughout with all the abilities and eloquence of the two contending parties. The truth was, they both felt the magnitude and importance of the question before them: so great a one had not been agitated in Parliament during the present century.

All that mass of argumentation was re-produced on this occasion, which had composed the materials of the numberless debates that had filled both Houses of Parliament during the last ten years, and had been repeated all over the nation to no other purpose than to breed ill blood among the disputants.

The sum of this famous debate was, that ministry contended in the same manner it had done before, for the necessity of drawing the sword, and manfully asserting the rights and the dignities of the parent state. Lenity was now become a subject of derision in the Colonies; and was imputed to imbecility and fears. The Americans, through long forbearance, were become incorrigible by any other than harsh means. They thought themselves in a condition to abolish the sovereignty of Britain in America, and were now resolved to do it. It was incumbent on every native of Britain, in such a case, to stand forth, and to vindicate the interest  
and



and glory of his country : it was the duty of Parliament and ministry to summon every particle of spirit that was left in the nation, to a contest wherein all that was dear to them, as individuals as well as a people, was so deeply involved.

The Americans had forgotten the hand that had planted and reared them : they were become unmindful of that protection and those bounties they were perpetually receiving from the generosity of Britain. It behoved us, if we valued our own character, to make them sensible that we were still the great and potent people they acknowledged us, while we were showering favours upon them. It was to these favours they owed the grandeur and opulence at which they were now arrived. We had but lately saved them from conquest and slavery ; and they now repaid us with an accusation of tyranny : this was ingratitude in the extreme, as our requisitions from them were small, even in the avowal of their warmest friends, and their power to grant them no less undeniable ; but their inclinations were to deny every request we should make.

To temporize in the midst of so much provocation, would be to encourage further insults and outrages. Britain had nothing else, indeed, to expect, until she had put an effectual stop to the power of committing them. The whole conduct of the Americans breathed hatred and defiance. The Congress, with an appearance of moderation, was taking every possible measure to destroy the authority of Britain throughout the Colonies, and to devolve it upon themselves. All the acts and proceedings of that Assembly amply justified such an assertion : they tended uniformly to inflame the people against Great Britain, by representing all her measures as framed with an intent to introduce a despotic government into the Colonies.

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As to the suggestions of danger from foreign powers, they from whom it was hinted this danger would chiefly arise, had colonies to manage as well as Great Britain. It was hardly to be apprehended that they would be guilty of so much impolicy as to encourage rebellions in other colonies, which might, on the first occasion, become precedents for imitation in their own.

A proper reinforcement in America would encourage those to declare themselves, who, from the uncertainty of our measures, though they remained still our secret friends, dared not step forth and avow their sentiments: these, if duly supported, would prove no inconsiderable number; and, added to the forces that would be stationed among them, would counterbalance the power of the malcontents.

In answer to these assertions it was argued by the opposition, that the address was in itself a measure replete with barbarity, no less than with imprudence: it tended to put arms into the hands of every man throughout the continent who suspected the designs of the British administration, and to expose to ill usage and ruin, every person who was known or imagined to be a friend to Britain.

The rigour of the law should never be carried into politics. Were the Americans ever so culpable, ministry ought not to have perceived their guilt, unless it had, at the same time, discovered a sure and ready method of bringing them to punishment without endangering the safety of the state.

The idea of becoming independent was imputed to the Americans; but what were the proofs of this imputation? They repeatedly denied it in words; and their actions, until the present unfortunate difference, had always been full of loyalty and attachment.



If any thing could bring about independency, it would be the conduct of ministry, who, by driving them to despondency, would compel them to adopt measures, to which they were not otherwise inclined. The most loyal and obedient subjects will not have patience for ever, in cases of tyrannical treatment. They will rise at last, and assert their rights; and they who stile them rebels on that account, should remember that oppression not only generates, but justifies resistance.

There were in all nations opinions generally received, which good policy would respect, while they produced no bad consequences. The persuasion prevailing in America, that internal taxation belonged to their own Assemblies exclusively, had always been established among them without contradiction from this side of the water. It ought not to have been attacked at so improper a season as the present, after having been virtually recognized by the repeal of several acts made in contradiction of it, and after it had been explicitly approved by some of the most learned and intelligent men in this kingdom.

The opinions of which the Americans are so tenacious, ought therefore to be treated with the less disrespect, as they are not only their own, but those of numbers of people in this country. Authorized and countenanced in this manner, was it surprising they should continue inflexible in their resolutions to adhere to them? especially as they were founded upon a prescription that had lasted from their first settlement in that part of the world, a space of time consisting now of more than one hundred and fifty years, during which they had remained in the uninterrupted possession of the privileges of which we now sought to deprive them.

It was the greatest of misfortunes to a state, when those who ruled it, endeavoured, without appa-



rent necessity, to alter the system and maxims of governing long adopted, and the utility of which had been confirmed by experience. Such was, however, the case of Britain: that mildness and benignity which was wont to direct the measures of former ministers, was now laid aside as obsolete: severity and imperiousness had taken their place: implicit obedience was now imposed upon the Colonies, as the only condition upon which Great Britain would relax of her displeasure, and suspend the hostile operations designed against them.

But was war and conquest the medium of rendering their possession useful to this country? Would the conflict prove of no duration? Were the scandalous falsehoods of cowardice and imbecility, so wantonly charged upon the Americans, to be ever so well grounded, still the very nature of their country would fight for them: that alone would impede, considerably, our military enterprizes, and greatly retard the subjugation of so immense a continent; mean while the sinews of war would quickly be relaxed. The suspension of so considerable a commerce as that of our Colonies, would cast a damp on all our operations.

Allowing, however, that British valour would triumph as heretofore in the plains of America, what must inevitably be the consequences of such a conquest? The Colonies, instead of peaceable and affectionate fellow subjects, descended from common parents, and united by every endearing tie to the people of Great Britain, would henceforward consider themselves as a conquered nation, bound to us by no other motives than those of fear. Such a situation would necessarily call for armies to enforce subjection: the sums wanted to maintain them, would exhaust the profits derived from the country they overawed, and render it hardly worth the keeping.

Were



Were these the ends for which Great Britain was so eagerly to contend? Did ministers imagine the inhabitants of this country would passively consent to see their purses drained, and their strength wasted in pursuit of schemes so evidently marked with infatuation, and which, at best, would only leave us where they found us? What more would they produce than the retention of America? But was not that our own already, without putting it to stake by a war of which the issue was so precarious?

The principles that actuated ministers were totally repugnant to the spirit of the constitution. There was a time when loftiness and pride were only thought proper to be assumed with the avowed enemies of this nation; and when condescension and lenity were viewed as the duty of ministers towards the subject; but an odious change had happened: submission and deference was shown to foreigners, while our own people were treated with haughtiness. This was reversing the long established rule of English politics. But let not those who had introduced this insulting innovation, promise themselves impunity: arbitrary conduct was so intolerable to the people of this land, that they would not suffer it either when levelled at themselves, or at their fellow subjects in any other part of the British dominions.

Ministers might, for a while, carry on their measures elatedly, and look upon opposition with contempt; but a day would come, when the good sense of the nation would deprive them of those majorities of which they now made such a boast. When the iniquity and folly of their measures had been fully proved by events, then the public would rise upon them as one man, and call them to account for the mischief they had brought upon it.

This, they might depend, would be their fate. The only chance they had to escape from the justice



of their country, was the progress of that corruption and venality through which they were now enabled to contrive its ruin; but even that would have its bounds: public calamities, when risen to their highest pitch, demanded for victims those who had caused them; and superceded all other feelings but those of indignation and revenge: the annals of all nations were confirmations of this truth.

In order to obviate these calamities, and to do justice to themselves as well as to the Americans, the people of England ought seriously to ponder, whether they had a right to pass condemnation over a numerous division of British subjects, who not only claimed, but were unquestionably entitled to every right enjoyed by Englishmen. In this case, the first position they should lay down, was, that ancestry and locality gave no right of dominion to one nation over another: were such a maxim once to be admitted, the world would be thrown into endless confusion, and no prince or state would be safe from foreign pretensions.

The only just and righteous principle on which to conduct so important an examination, was to consider the respective powers and faculties of each party, and how far they were obliged to contribute to the common exigencies of the empire. If, upon a due estimation of these, it appeared that a reasonable proportion of supplies was denied, the party that was aggrieved by this denial, would clearly be intitled to tax the other with injustice, and to compel him to an equitable reparation.

But was this the principle that guided administration? Did they not, on the contrary, revive by their conduct the long-exploded doctrine of hereditary right? Which, though just and necessary when applied to property, was not admissible in England in matters of government; and was not, therefore,



therefore, applicable to the question depending between Great Britain and America.

In contradiction to this fundamental principle of the British constitution, ministry insisted upon a passive obedience in the Colonies: they were required to submit to the dictates of Great Britain, for no other reason than that she was the parent state. Was there no better motive to influence their obedience, no body could blame them for refusing it. But the ties between Britain and her Colonies are of a far nobler, as well as much more binding nature: origin and consanguinity, though highly to be prized, were not the most valuable: it was the constitution transmitted to them from Britain, and the brotherly assistance they had hitherto experienced from Englishmen, that ought to render the name sacred to them. While those ties remained unviolated, we had no room to complain of their behaviour; but absolute lords and masters were titles they would not recognize in Englishmen, any more than these would recognize them in any others.

When ministers acted on such unwarrantable grounds, the question was no longer, whether the measures they proposed should be taken into consideration, but whether they themselves ought not instantly to be deprived of the power which they used so unconstitutionally. The dispute, therefore, was now, not between Great Britain and America, but between the ministry and the constitution; and the question was, "Whether we should lose our Colonies, or give up our ministers."

Charges of so heavy a nature were of course retorted by the ministerial party, with equal asperity. All the resistance and disturbances in America, were imputed to the opposition in plainer and more explicit terms than ever. A factious republican spirit was gone forth, that actuated every writer and speaker



in the American cause: it filled the nation with disloyalty, and the House with incendiaries. America, it was said, would never have hoisted the standard of rebellion, if the trumpet of sedition had not been heard in Britain.

This violent debate lasted till three o'clock in the morning, when the motion for re-committing the address, was rejected by two hundred and eighty-eight, against one hundred and five.

In this manner was terminated the most important business that had, in the memory of man, engaged the attention of the British Parliament. Not only the natives of this country, but all Europe was impatient to learn the decision of this great question. While it was impending, the foreign ministers in London were continually employed in watching the motions of administration, and the debates of Parliament: they justly considered it as pregnant with consequences that might eventually give a new turn to the face of all Europe.

On the very next day a conference was held between the two Houses, wherein they  
1775. both agreed to unite in the address.

In the mean time petitions had been preparing by the London merchants trading to America, and from those concerned in the West India trade, to be laid before the House of Lords. The Marquis of Rockingham, as the principal Peer in the opposition, was applied to on this occasion to present them, but he was prevented by a previous motion in favour of the address,

This however did not hinder a long debate concerning the propriety and necessity of receiving them. It was carried on with no less heat and animosity of expression than that which had taken place the day before in the House of Commons.

The papers, on the veracity of which the address had been framed, were represented by the opposition



tion as partial and mutilated, and unfit for proper documents in so weighty a matter. It was for this reason the duty of the House to attend with the more readiness to the representation of the merchants; whose testimony, as persons deeply and essentially interested in bringing truth to light in this important juncture, might be depended on with much greater safety.

It was their particular desire to be heard, before the House took any determination relating to America. To refuse this, it was urged, would be to tell the world, that right or wrong, its determination would be against the sense of their petition. Was this a warrantable treatment of respectable and loyal subjects, who were endeavouring to serve the state, by affording to government all the information they were masters of. Good policy required the House to hearken to them, as well as equity and good manners.

It was answered by the ministerial party, that no disrespect was intended to persons of so much consequence in this commercial nation, as the merchants whose petition was now in the House: that it was with great grief administration was obliged to declare, it could not be received consistently with the general interests of the kingdom. They were desired seriously to consider, how necessary it was become to prevent the evils threatened to this country by the proceedings in America; that were they permitted to continue, the commercial grandeur of this nation would suffer a fatal diminution, if not a total overthrow, in which no individuals would be greater sufferers than themselves. It became them, from so just a motive, to confide in the wisdom of Parliament, as it was not doubted that events would hereafter convince them, that by asserting the supremacy of the British legislature, in the manner



proposed, all those advantages would be secured, about which they were so justly solicitous. They were exhorted to submit to the temporary inconveniencies which might result from the resolutions that must be adopted in the present circumstances of public affairs. They would not probably be of long duration, and would be followed by a state of prosperity, which would be the more permanent, from the removal of the obstacles which they were now about to encounter.

The debate relating to the address, carried the speakers on both sides into a wide field of discussion. The two greatest Law Lords in the [kingdom, entered into a contest, wherein their learning and eloquence was reciprocally displayed with the greatest conspicuity. The point in contention was to ascertain whether the Americans were in actual rebellion. The different opinions they held on this weighty subject, and the variety of arguments with which they combated each other, afforded a melancholy proof of the uncertainty of the law, in a case where it ought particularly to be perspicuous, and void of all manner of intricacy.

A repetition took place, on this occasion, of all those arguments against the Americans that have already been mentioned. It was represented, that upon emergencies of this nature, a state that is bent upon asserting its authority or its dignity, must not expect to go through such an arduous undertaking without many difficulties. All orders and denominations would severally be aggrieved by the hardships concomitant on hostilities. But they were no more than what befel the community at large in every nation that waged war. The situation of Britain would not be worse than that of her enemies. But whatever destiny might await us, whether victory or defeat, whether we should preserve or lose  
America,



America, still the trial must be made. It would be pusillanimity to give it up without disputing its possession to the utmost of our power; Englishmen were not wont tamely to relinquish advantages;—wherever the standard of Britain is planted, it ought to be vigorously defended, and every loss patiently borne, except that of national honour.

The arguments used in the reply made to this reasoning by the minority, were much the same as had been employed in the House of Commons against the address. Their general intent was to prove the imprudence of precipitating the kingdom into a war, which if unsuccessful, would reduce it to the brink of ruin, and to which there appeared no sufficient reason to hope for success, when we took into consideration the probability of that universal confederacy which would be formed against Britain by her numerous enemies on the European, as well as on the American continent.

It was particularly noticed, that a subject involving so many consequences of the last importance, had been driven, as it were, through both Houses with a hurry equally unworthy of its magnitude and their own dignity. So much haste was, according to the proverb, never attended with good speed. It evinced the apprehensions of ministry, that were due time given thoroughly to investigate their measures, their injudiciousness would not fail to be discovered. Why should they otherwise be so eager to bring them to a conclusion? A length of time would elapse before it would be possible to commence their execution; had that interval been dedicated to a mature discussion of the various matter deserving Parliamentary notice, elucidations would have followed, which might have thrown new light upon objects, which could not be too thoroughly attended to,

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The whole night was consumed in this debate ; it concluded with the total defeat of the Marquis of Rockingham's motion : the numbers for him were only twenty-nine, those against him one hundred and four.

This defeat produced a remarkable protest, drawn up with uncommon energy, and which strongly characterized the temper of the opposition at that period. It concluded in the following words, which may be considered as a summary of the sentiments entertained by the opponents to ministry, both in Parliament, and throughout the nation.

“ The means of enforcing the authority of the  
“ British legislature is confided to persons who have  
“ hitherto used no effectual means of conciliating,  
“ or of reducing those who oppose that authority:  
“ This appears in the constant failure of all their  
“ projects, the insufficiency of all their information,  
“ and the disappointment of all the hopes  
“ which they have for several years held out to the  
“ public. Parliament has never refused any of  
“ their proposals, and yet our affairs have proceeded  
“ from bad to worse, until we have been  
“ brought step by step, to that state of confusion  
“ and violence, which was the natural result of  
“ desperate measures.

“ We therefore protest against an address founded  
“ on no proper Parliamentary information,  
“ which was introduced by refusing to suffer the  
“ presentation of petitions against it, (although it  
“ be the undoubted right of the subject to present  
“ the same) which followed the rejection of every  
“ mode of conciliation; which holds out no substantial  
“ offer of redress of grievances, and  
“ which promises support to those ministers who  
“ have inflamed America, and grossly misconducted  
“ the affairs of Great Britain.”

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The address thus jointly voted by both Houses, was carried to the throne, and answered with an assurance of taking due measures to enforce its contents, and a message exhorting Parliament to make speedy provision for the effectually carrying into execution the measures they recommended.



## C H A P. IX.

*Transactions in Great Britain relating to America.*

1775.

AFTER providing a military force to be stationed at Boston, it was perceived that farther measures would be necessary to execute the plan proposed. Soldiers might quell insurrections and insults, but could not enforce the observance of laws and regulations, without the intervention of the magistracy; and it was evident that no assistance of this kind was to be expected from the people of Massachusetts.

They beheld with silent abhorrence the coercive scheme that had been formed to compel their obedience to the injunctions of the British legislature. Though they abstained from active resistance, they were determined to throw every impediment in the way of compulsion, and if they could not face it openly, to fatigue it by indirect and secret opposition.

The difficulty lay in procuring assistance from the inferior body of magistrates; as few of them were well-wishers to the measures in agitation, it was found impracticable to employ them in their execution; yet it was only through such means the commonalty was to be brought to a state of regular and peaceable obedience.

As the indissoluble adherence to each other among all orders and classes in Massachusetts, rendered it impossible to seek for co-operators among them, and as the ministry was fully determined to proceed on the plan of coercion, the only method remaining to make it effectual, was to extend it in such a manner,



manner, as to affect indiscriminately all the inhabitants of the Province without exception. By including them in one general punishment, it would become the interest of all to conform unanimously to the laws enacted for them, in order the more speedily to procure its removal.

To this intent a bill was brought into Parliament, the purport of which was, to restrain the commerce of the four Provinces of New England to Great Britain, Ireland, and the English islands in the West Indies, and to prohibit them from carrying on the fishery at Newfoundland.

The reasons alledged in support of this proposal were, that as the Colonies had entered into agreements not to trade with Britain, we were entitled to prevent them from trading with any other country. Their charter restricted them to the act of navigation; the relaxations from it were favours, to which by their disobedience they had no further pretence. The Newfoundland fisheries were the ancient property of Great Britain, and disposible therefore at her will and discretion: it was no more than just to deprive rebels of the use of them.

Though the other Provinces of New England did not seem directly concerned in the rebellion, yet the British government was so little respected there, that they deserved little more indulgence than that of Massachusetts. In New Hampshire, the populace had seized upon a powder magazine, in one of the King's forts; and from the neighbourhood of that Province, and the temper of its inhabitants, the act would be eluded, unless they were included in it.

Connecticut manifested the same disposition.— Upon the report of a fray between the soldiery and the people of Boston, that Province rose in great numbers, and marched directly to their assistance.



nance. This showed at once what we had to expect from that quarter.

As an alleviation to the severity of this act, it was proposed, that all persons should be excepted from it whose good behaviour the Governor of the Province would certificate, or who should subscribe a test acknowledging the rights of Parliament.

This bill was received by the opposition with every expression of disapprobation. It was particularly reprobated for involving such a multitude of innocent people in its operation. Half a million of people were condemned to famine for the delinquency of a few, on a supposition they were guilty. This was a precedent unknown in countries governed by just and equitable laws, and could only be found in the transactions of tyrants.

But were Massachusetts guilty, why must the infliction of so severe a chastisement extend to its neighbours? This was an excess of resentment which nothing could justify: it belied the mildness of character which had hitherto done so much honour to the British legislature; and was beside an act of impolicy that would raise up foes to Britain where it had none before. When people found that we made no discrimination between our friends and enemies, they would join with the latter to rescue themselves from universal oppression.

Britain, in the present instance, treated her own subjects much worse than she had ever done her avowed and most inveterate enemies. During the many wars between England and France, hostilities had been restrained to the nation, and never exercised upon individuals. Our fleets and armed vessels had always spared the fishing craft of the enemy: this was a rule from which they never deviated, even in the most bloody contentions. It was beneath the character of a civilized and generous people



people to molest poor fishermen, and to deprive the wretched inhabitants of a sea-coast of their food.

New England, they all knew, subsisted upon its fisheries; the produce of these were bartered for absolute necessaries. It was also the medium that enabled them to settle accounts with Britain, for the prodigious demands they were perpetually making upon her merchants. Thus to cut them off from that resource, would be to stop their payments to Britain: this, in fact, would be throwing upon ourselves the punishment intended for them.

Should this bill operate to the extent proposed, the effects produced by it would reach farther than it was ever designed. In case of a future reconciliation with the Colonies, the laborious and indigent classes employed in the fishery, would by that time necessarily have betaken themselves to other occupations for their subsistence, and it would be a difficult matter to recall them to their former business. In the interval, this profitable trade might fall into the hands of other nations, who would, of course, use all their endeavours to retain it. Britain was too far distant to engross it wholly to herself, and would have too many objects to distract her attention in consequence of this quarrel, to take any more than ordinary care of this branch of her trade.

Another evil would arise from this bill, which ministry did not appear to foresee. By declaring war again the Colonies, and depriving them of their fisheries, the fishermen were driven into the immediate service of rebellion; they would man privateers, and accelerate the levies of troops they were making; and being robust and hardy men, would prove the best recruits that could be found. Thus it was clear that this bill, in whatever light it was viewed, was highly disreputable and pernicious.



The further allegations, on the other hand, in favour of the bill were, that Britain herein acted only by way of retaliation and self-defence against the Colonies. The precedent was their own; they had combined, as far as in them lay, to destroy our commerce and manufactures, and to reduce our islands to the utmost distress. Had any European power acted in the manner they did, we should have done the same, and probably more.

The accusation of barbarity was equally groundless. No more was evidently meant than to compel the Colonies to pay just obedience to the parent state. The inconveniencies resulting from this bill they had brought upon themselves, and might put an end to whenever they pleased. The measure was vigorous, but not precipitate: it left them leisure to reflect on their situation, and to regain the good-will of Great Britain, by embracing the proffered means of reconciliation, which were a peaceable submission to the laws it had enacted.

In other countries a revolt met with a far heavier chastisement: forfeitures, corporal punishments, and death, were the usual methods employed upon such occasions, to bring rebellious subjects to reason.

It was with the sincerest grief that the friends of Britain were made partakers of the inconveniencies arising from this bill; but this was an inevitable consequence of these unhappy feuds. They would, from this consideration, be the first to excuse us: they knew that in war, friends and foes were often intermixed, and liable to suffer the same calamities.

Britain had long waited before she adopted this measure. It was now ten years since America not only threatened, but actually put it in execution. Thrice had the Colonies thrown our merchants and manufacturers into the utmost consternation:—It



was now our turn to try whether we could not intimidate them by the same means.

It behoved the people of Britain, if they had any spirit left, to crush at once this insulting disposition, which kept them in continual alarms, and rendered the possession of America a matter of more anxiety than advantage. It were even better to part with it at once, than to live in such a state of uncertainty and apprehension on its account.

The period was now arrived long wished for by America :—She now thought herself in a capacity to throw off all dependence upon Great Britain, and was determined to risk the attempt. It became Great Britain not to shrink from the contest: if she was not able to face the Americans, she was not worthy of ruling them.

The connection between Great Britain and her Colonies, were matters to remain on the present footing, was no longer definable: they acknowledged subjection, and yet would pay no obedience. Now was the time to ascertain it for a perpetuity.—If we were to remain masters of them, we should then know what settlement to make; and if we were to lose them, we should even, in that case, rid ourselves of infinite perplexity.

It was replied by the minority, that the spirit so repeatedly required by the ministry, however laudable in respect to foreign nations, could only be productive of evil in domestic contests. Those who acted in differences of this kind with most lenity and forbearance, were possessed of the spirit most to be desired on such occasions. That heat and impetuosity of conduct were the bane of all proceedings at home, was a truth acknowledged by all men; and it was upon this solid and unquestionable principle the ministry would be condemned by the unbiassed and impartial world.



Experience militated invincibly against the ministry. What were the effects produced by the spirit that dictated the last acts against Massachusetts? Had they humbled that Colony? Had they terrified the Americans? Had they not, on the contrary, spirited up the whole American continent to an open and confirmed resistance? Why should other effects be expected from the further exertions of such a spirit?

The issue of this debate was, that the bill was carried for ministry, by two hundred and sixty-one votes, against eighty-five.

A petition against it was, however, presented by the London merchants concerned in the American trade : It was principally founded on the danger that would accrue to the fisheries of Great Britain from such a prohibition.

From the evidence which was brought in support of this petition, it appeared that the American fisheries were in so flourishing a condition ten years before the present period, that the four provinces of New England employed in that branch of trade alone, near forty-six thousand tons of shipping, and six thousand seamen ; that the produce of their fisheries in the foreign markets, amounted in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-four, to upwards of three hundred and twenty thousand pounds.

Since that time, the fisheries, together with their profits, had greatly increased. What rendered them particularly valuable, was, that all the materials used in them, (the salt for curing the fish, and the timber for building the vessels excepted) were purchased in Britain ; and that the net proceeds of the trade were all remitted hither.

It also appeared, that it would not be practicable to transfer these fisheries to Halifax or Quebec, were ever such assistance or encouragement given to  
either



either of these places. They had neither vessels nor people to man them, and would never be able to procure supplies of seamen from New England : such was the aversion the government of those two settlements was held in by the natives of that Province.

A circumstance came out at the same time, in the course of this evidence, that was strongly insisted on as a just motive to recall this bill. The commercial concerns of the city of London, only, were so great and extensive in New England, that this latter stood indebted to it near a million sterling.

This was urged as a powerful argument against an act which would totally deprive the British merchants of all hopes of being paid so considerable a sum ; as it could only arise out of the balance produced by the gains upon the fisheries.

It was shown at the same time, that the effects of this bill would be felt with great severity by some people, who were entirely innocent of the charges laid to the generality of the Americans : these were the inhabitants of the island of Nantucket, lying off the coast of New England. This barren spot, about fifteen miles long, and three broad, contained about six thousand souls, almost all Quakers : its products could not maintain twenty families ; but the industry of the inhabitants was such, that they kept one hundred and thirty vessels constantly employed in the whale fishery, which they carried on in the North Seas, on the coasts of Africa and Brazil, and even so far as the Falkland islands, and the southern extremities of the Magellanic shores.

Were it only from the applause and encouragement due to so much industry and resolution, so remarkable a people ought to have been exempted from the general calamity ; and it behoved the generosity of the British nation, to compassionate the case of this handful of brave and laborious men.



This particular case was, indeed, so remarkable and striking, that a motion was accordingly made on the side of administration, to procure them just and proper relief.

But in order, at the same time, to counteract the general intent of the petition against the bill, a second petition was presented by the merchants and principal inhabitants of the town of Poole, in direct opposition to that from London.

It represented that the restrictions intended by the bill against the New England fishery, would not prove any ways detrimental to the trade of England, which was fully able, with proper exertions, to supply the demands of foreign markets. The produce of this fishery already exceeded half a million, the whole of which centered in Britain; whereas much of the profits of the fisheries carried on by the Colonies, remained abroad.

What materially rendered the British Newfoundland fishery more beneficial to this country than that of New England, was that it bred a great number of hardy seamen, peculiarly fit for the service of the navy; whereas the New England seamen are, by act of Parliament, exempted from being pressed.

It appeared in the examination of those witnesses who supported this petition, that the fishery from Britain to Newfoundland, employed about four hundred ships, amounting to three hundred and sixty thousand tons, and two thousand shallops of twenty thousand, navigated by twenty thousand seamen. Six hundred thousand quintals of fish were taken every season; the returns of which were annually worth, on a moderate computation, five hundred thousand pounds.

But this representation did not prevent opposition from reprobating the bill, as tending, like the other acts lately passed, to exasperate the Colonies to a degree that would preclude all ideas of reconciliation.



ciliation. They would now look on Parliament as an avowed and declared enemy, taken up only with the search of means to distress them.

The ministry was accused of acting not only with barbarity, but absurdity. If their wishes and intentions went to the preservation of the British dominion over America, to what purpose did they strive to ruin that country? The most despotic princes, in their punishment of insurrections against their authority, carried it no further than against the principal delinquents: the bulk of the community, however guilty, was spared; and the general interest of the country still was consulted. But the resentment of our rulers knew no bounds; they involved in one common destruction the property and inhabitants of America, as if they had determined to render the possession of it of no value; and, indeed, as if they foresaw, that from their inability and imprudence, it would be lost for ever to the Crown of Great Britain.

They who spoke on the other side, were no less pointed and severe in their condemnation of the Americans, and of the constant fullness and perversity with which they treated the condescending disposition of the parent state. They contended, at the same time, that this very bill against their fishery, however restrictive it might appear, would not produce those distresses that had been painted in such frightful colours. The idea of reducing them to real famine was ridiculous: the country abounded with provisions; they were, in some measure, the staple commodities of the land; and if some parts were deficient, others were plentiful. But were it true that they would be exposed to all manner of wretchedness, still it would be their own seeking; as submission to Britain would at once put an end to their misery.



Still, however, it was contended by opposition, that an act of such a nature would disgrace us in the eyes of Europe, and justify those malicious imputations of a cruel disposition, in which so many foreigners delighted. They would now have some ground for their reproaches : a bill brought into an assembly composed of the principal personages in the nation, with an avowed intent to destroy, by hunger, some hundred thousands of our fellow subjects whose guilt was disputable, would astonish all mankind, and excite the anger and indignation of all who professed the least humanity. The bill was absolutely atrocious ; and those who could approve it, were men of no feeling.

A deed of this kind was not justifiable according to the most rigorous ideas of war ; in the perpetration of the most violent hostilities, the extreme hatred and inveteracy would preserve a remnant of compassion for age, infancy, and sex ; but the British Parliament was now to be steeled against all these considerations, and taught to sacrifice whole nations at once to the wrath and resentment of ministers,

What would be the fate of our countrymen at Boston in the midst of this universal calamity ? Hunger, it was well known, would give courage to the fearful, and strength to the weak. The British military stationed in Massachusetts were but a handful ; and it could not be expected they would be able to make an effectual stand against the desperate and enraged multitudes that would assail them night and day, in revenge for the barbarities exercised upon their country. They must necessarily sink under the weight of numbers, and add to the list of those victims doomed by ministerial haughtiness to destruction.

It was replied by the other party, that whatever descriptions the opponents to the bill might think proper



proper to make, of the deplorable condition to which it would bring the people of New England, still they proved no more, than that unless the inhabitants of that Colony returned to their duty and allegiance to Great Britain, they would experience a very severe punishment. This was not denied : it was even the object in view ; and was certainly preferable to a denunciation of war, which would necessarily be followed with consequences far more terrible and destructive.

By this bill coercion undoubtedly was meant ; but it was of an orderly and peaceable kind : the ability of Britain to crush all opposition in the Colonies, was now to be manifested ; and what method more efficacious, and at the same time less hostile, could have been proposed than the present ? Not a sword was to be drawn, nor musket fired ; no blood, in short, was to be shed by this measure. It held the rod over the heads of the guilty ; but it invited them to repentance : it threatened, but smote only those whose obstinacy extorted the blow. In a word, it affected none but such as were determined to suffer. It was therefore the height of malevolence and misrepresentation, to describe, as barbarous and inhuman, a mode of conduct which, when impartially and circumstantially examined, was evidently much less calculated to hurt than to terrify.

Nothing was more probable than that when the Colony of Massachusetts became thoroughly sensible how entirely their fate rested in the hands of Britain, the most refractory and averse to obedience would see the futility of all their efforts against the superior might of this country. All classes would then unite in the cessation of a resistance, from which nothing but misery could be expected : they would even congratulate themselves on the temper and coolness with which the parent state had acted in



bringing them to a just perception of their inferiority, and their impotency to resist its will, whenever it was earnestly determined to enforce it. Thus a great and important end would be accomplished without employing sanguinary means; and Britain would have the satisfaction of quelling a rebellion without coming to hostilities.

In the House of Peers, the debates on this bill were carried on much in the same strain. Ministry brought witnesses to prove, from their own personal knowledge and experience, how greatly the British fishery might be increased in Newfoundland; and adduced a variety of arguments to show, that were America to be totally excluded from that fishery, the consequences would be highly beneficial to Great Britain; the number of our seamen would be augmented in proportion to the decrease of theirs, and our profits increased in the same degree.

The opposition on the other side, exerted itself to prove the general utility of the American trade, and the constant settled benefits resulting from it to this country, which were now rising daily to an importance truly astonishing. The progress of the trade to New England, was minutely traced from the commencement of this present century, when it amounted only to seventy thousand pounds, to the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four, when it had arisen to one hundred and eighty thousand; but in the ten following years, notwithstanding a furious and extensive war, it increased to four hundred thousand pounds; and from the last peace to the present period, had gradually advanced to double that immense sum.

A country of which a single province took off such a quantity of merchandize from Great Britain, was not to be studiously depreciated by partial representations. It little mattered whether the profits of commerce were direct or circuitous; it was  
sufficient



sufficient if they were real. Though New England carried on a vast trade with other parts of the world, the demands from Britain in consequence of that trade, were prodigious, and answered our purpose as effectually as if we carried on that trade ourselves.

There was no occasion, therefore, to deprive any part of America of any particular branch of commerce, on a supposition that we should engross it to ourselves. This, if so practicable as represented, would require much time and attention : But was it prudent to run such a risk ? Did we not receive already the same profits we proposed to derive from this alteration ? The path was now smooth and easy ; why should we be at the trouble of seeking out another, which, at best, would not be preferable to the present ?

A variety of additional arguments were used to invalidate the propriety of the bill. The mutilation of the papers on which that information was founded, which was held forth to both Houses as authentic, was complained of in the bitterest terms : it was carrying on a system of deception unworthy of men of rank, who were intrusted with the public affairs : such a management of them, would lay them open to the severest resentment and prosecution, and leave them without any excuse for their justification. Parliament depended upon them for true and fair accounts of those transactions, by which its suffrages were to be guided : if false or defective the fault was solely their own, and they must answer for it to the justice of their country.

But the efforts of opposition were as unavailing in this, as in the other House. The absolute and indispensable necessity of coming to a final conclusion of the American business, overcame all other ideas : total sovereignty, or total loss, were judged the happiest alternative for Great Britain : its councils had  
been



been distracted for more than ten years by incessant altercations on this subject; it was become odious and disgusting, as it filled the whole nation, from the very highest to the very lowest classes, with reciprocal inveteracy. The method proposed would bring matters to a speedy decision; which, whatever it might be, was preferable to a constant scene of domestic confusion.

In virtue of these arguments, the majority of the House loudly declared for the bill. It was passed by one hundred and four to twenty-nine.

So resolutely was the House of Peers bent upon acting with the utmost rigour and severity, as the most eligible means of bringing America to reason, that it proposed to include in the restrictions enacted by this bill, the Provinces of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina; in this, however, they did not meet with the concurrence of the House of Commons; and the bill was passed without this addition.

It produced a remarkable protest. The Lords who framed it, spoke with uncommon severity of the system on which the bill was founded. “That government, said they, which attempts to preserve its authority by destroying the trade of its subjects, and by involving the innocent and guilty in a common ruin, if it acts from a choice of such means, confesses itself unworthy; if from inability to find any other, admits itself wholly incompetent to the end of its institution.”

They accused the ministry of endeavouring to purchase the nation’s consent to this act, by promising them the spoils of the New England fishery. This, they said, was “a scheme full of weakness and indecency; of indecency, because it may be suspected that the desire of the confiscation has created the guilt; and of weakness, because it sup-  
poses



“ poses that whatever is taken from the Colonies,  
“ is of course to be transferred to ourselves.”

This protest took severe notice of an opinion, which some persons laboured industriously to circulate throughout the nation; and which had been maintained in both Houses of Parliament. This was the assertion of which notice has already been taken, that the Americans wanted spirit to go through what they had undertaken; and that Britain would find them an easy conquest.

An opinion of this kind was represented by the friends of America, as highly unbecoming such an assembly as that wherein it had been delivered. It was not supported by truth, and could only be viewed as the effusion of party resentment; it was thrown out in the heat of debate, as an inducement to coincide with the measures in agitation, and to remove all apprehension of the dangers which might arise from their prosecution.

But it was further asserted, that a charge of this kind was the more imprudent and unadvised, as exclusive of its containing a false and injurious accusation, it tended in case of coercive measures, to slacken the care and solicitude with which they ought to be pursued; and to occasion remissness in those to whom they might be intrusted, from a persuasion that the enemy to be encountered was not deserving of much fear, and required but little pains to be overcome.



## CHAP. X.

*Military and Naval preparations against America.—Lord North's Conciliatory Motion.—Petition from Jamaica in favour of the Colonies.—Act for restraining the Commerce of the Southern Colonies.—Mr. Burke's Conciliatory Plan.—Mr. Hartley's Motion to the same intent.*

**F**EW acts of Parliament were ever received with more approbation from one party, and more disapprobation from the other, than this bill for restraining the commerce of New England, and depriving it of its fisheries. While it was applauded by the one as a judicious and necessary measure, it was reprobated by the other with the utmost vehemence and indignation, and represented as the genuine offspring of that tyrannical spirit which had by its opponents so long been imputed to administration.

Numbers of those who favoured the cause of the Americans, were studiously outrageous in their complaints against this bill : they loaded it with every opprobrious epithet they could devise ; and, among other injurious names, they called it the act of starvation.

In the mean time, as Great Britain had now taken her final resolution, ministry was employed in making those preparations that were judged requisite to carry it into execution.

The number of troops intended for New England, amounted to ten thousand men. This, according to the opinion of those military men who were consulted upon this occasion, appeared a force fully sufficient to execute the measures of government.

But



But this opinion was strenuously opposed. Such a force was represented as totally inadequate to the end proposed, and as only productive of much expence to little purpose.

Ministry was charged with equal imprudence for engaging the nation in hostilities, and for its manner of conducting them. Since America is to be subdued, said opposition, let it be done effectually: let a fleet and army be sent forth, in the strength of which the public may justly confide; such as may, by its very appearance, intimidate. The first impression ought, if possible to be decisive, and every effort should be made to render it such.

In this idea of the minority, not only their own adherents, but many of their antagonists as readily concurred. The only reason alledged for acting otherwise, was that an expectation had been formed, that the Americans, upon a mature consideration of the matter, would think it more consistent with their interest to desist from, than to continue an opposition that would certainly involve them in bloodshed and desolation; and which, were it to succeed, would entail such expences, losses, and mischiefs upon their country, as would require many years to repair.

Before the scene of action was entered upon, the ministry resolved once more to attempt a reconciliation with America. A motion was accordingly made in the House of Commons, importing, that when the Governor, Council, and Assembly of any of the Colonies, shall propose to make provision, according to their respective circumstances, for the common defence, such proportion to be raised under the authority of the Colony, and disposable by Parliament; and shall engage to provide for the support of the civil government, and the administration of justice, it will then be proper, if such proposal should be approved of by the King in Parliament, to forbear levying



or imposing any taxes on that Colony; those duties excepted, that may be expedient to impose for the regulation of commerce, the net produce of which shall be carried to the account of the Colony where it is raised.

This motion was grounded on the sincere desire of giving America full proof how far it was from the intentions of Britain to adopt harsh measures, if they could possibly be avoided. Parliament, in its late address to the Throne respecting the Colonies, not only meant to show its final determination to support the claims of Great Britain, at all hazards, but also its willingness, upon proper concessions, to restore America to her favour. That notwithstanding the British legislature could not give up the right of taxation, yet if the Americans would propose such a mode of contribution, as might at once be agreeable to themselves, and answer the end, Parliament would consent to suspend the exercise of that right, and yield to America the authority of raising in their own manner, their share of the contribution.

A resolution adopted on the ground of this motion would, it was said, be “ an infallible touch-  
 “ stone to try the sincerity of the Americans. If  
 “ their professions were real, and their opposition  
 “ founded only upon the principles which they pre-  
 “ tended, they must, consistently with those prin-  
 “ ciples, agree with this proposition. But if they  
 “ were actuated by sinister motives, and had dan-  
 “ gerous designs in contemplation, their refusal of  
 “ these terms would expose them to the world.—  
 “ We should then be prepared, and know how to  
 “ act. After having shown our wisdom, our jus-  
 “ tice, and our humanity, by giving them an op-  
 “ portunity of redeeming their past faults, and  
 “ holding out to them fitting terms of accommo-  
 “ dation: if they should reject them, we should  
 “ be



“ be justified in taking the most coercive measures.”

The opposition received this proposal with the utmost disapprobation. It was, they said, in no wise conciliatory : it was replete with insidiousness, and would appear such in the eyes of the Americans. The motives held out to the nation for uniting with ministry against America, were now, it was said, entirely changed. The honour and dignity of Great Britain were lately the sole principle on which they exhorted men to act ; obedience to the commercial regulations enacted by Parliament, and allegiance to the supreme sovereignty of this country, was their constant language : but they now abandoned that argument ; the contest was now to be for a prize of another nature, the acquisition of a revenue. This probably they deemed an object more interesting to the generality in a commercial nation, and for the obtaining of which people would be found more willing to exert themselves, than for a mere acknowledgment of superior dignity, by which neither the power of the state would receive any augmentation, nor the condition of individuals any relief.

In the mode of taxation proposed for America, there was no essential difference from that which had been adopted before, and insisted upon as legal. The Colonies were as completely taxed without their consent by requiring them to pay a stated sum, levied in their own manner, as by laying a number of duties on them to the same amount.

Another objection occurred, equally militating against the acceptance of this proposal by the Americans. No sum was specified ; they were left totally ignorant what the demands of Britain might be : this was an unpardonable defect in proposals of which they ought to have the clearest elucidation laid before them, in order to judge whether it was  
in



in their power, allowing it to be in their inclination, to accede to them.

After a long dispute the question was carried for the ministry, by two hundred and seventy-four votes, to eighty-eight.

In the mean time, the situation of the Colonies of North America, had excited, in a particular manner, the attention of the British islands in the West Indies. Incapable, from their situation, of resisting the authority of Great Britain in the same manner, they beheld silently the progress of a dispute which threatened to terminate in such terrible consequences. One of them, however, ventured to espouse their cause in a petition to the throne: this was the island of Jamaica, the most flourishing and powerful of any.

This petition, like the many others that had been repeatedly presented in favour of America, availed it nothing. Ministry seemed, on the contrary, daily to become further persuaded that more restrictions were necessary.

Another bill, as recommended by the Lords, was brought accordingly into the House, to restrain the commerce of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina, in the same manner as that of New England. The motives alleged were the accession of those Colonies to the resolutions adopted by New England, respecting the British trade and manufactures. This bill was readily agreed to.

But though petitions were rejected, the petitioners were not the less solicitous in supporting them, and in authenticating the facts on which they were founded. The West India merchants and planters, in particular, seconded the petition they had lately presented, with a detail of circumstances relating to the British islands in that part of the world, that was equally copious and important. This business  
was



was conducted in their behalf with great ability, by Mr. Glover, author of the poem *Leonidas*, a gentleman equally celebrated for his literary talents, and his commercial knowledge.

He stated with great energy and exactness, the prodigious value of the West India islands to Great Britain. It appeared, from his inquiries and researches, that exclusive of the intrinsic worth of the islands, their stock-in-trade, and other property, amounting to no less than sixty millions, the exportation to Britain, of late years, amounted annually to near two hundred thousand hogsheads and puncheons of sugar and rum, the weight of which was ninety-five thousand tons, and the value four millions. The direct revenue arising from this immense trade, consisted of above seven hundred thousand pounds, beside that which accrued from the collateral branches depending upon it.

The danger in which a war with America would place this advantageous commerce, was enlarged upon with much accuracy, and the necessity of a continual correspondence in trade between the islands and that continent, was pointed out in a variety of instances.

But among the Parliamentary transactions at that time, none was more remarkable than the conciliatory propositions respecting the Colonies, March 22, 1775. made by Mr. Burke, a gentleman whose abilities and eloquence had for several years been much admired in Parliament. He introduced these propositions in a speech that has been deservedly celebrated for its various excellencies.

“The questions,” he observed, “on which they were to decide that day, were whether they ought to concede, and what that concession ought to be. To enable them to determine on these great questions with a firm and precise judgment, it was necessary to consider distinctly the true nature, and



the peculiar circumstances of the object before them; as after all their struggles, whether they would, or would not, they must govern America according to that nature, and those circumstances, and not according to their own imaginations, or abstract ideas of right, nor by any means according to meer general theories of government."

He then entered into an accurate investigation of the present state and circumstances of the Colonies: he minutely examined their situation, extent, wealth, population, agriculture, and commerce, with their power and weight in the scale of empire. He then adverted to that invincible spirit of freedom which distinguishes them in so peculiar a manner from all other people. He accounted for it from their origin, education, and way of life, their political and religious principles, and their distance from the seat of government.

The conduct of Great Britain towards America, ought, he observed, to be regulated according to these various considerations. He then introduced a number of interesting facts and observations relating to that country, in order to show the necessity of governing it conformably to the ideas and habits long established among the inhabitants, and that all other plans would prove weak and insufficient.

He then described with great force and animation, the astonishing progress of population and commerce in that country, and how much they had contributed to the opulence and grandeur of Britain. From his review of the increase of our trade, at different stages, it appeared that in the year one thousand seven hundred and four, the exports from England to North America, the West Indies, and Africa, amounted only to about five hundred and seventy thousand pounds; but that in one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two, they exceeded six millions. It also appeared, that at the foregoing  
period,



period, the whole export trade of England, including that to the Colonies, amounted to little more than six millions and a half. Thus the trade to America was now become not half a million less than the whole of that which England carried on with all the world, at the first of the above periods. Valuing therefore the exportations from Great Britain at sixteen millions, America employed more than a third of our foreign trade.

He took notice of the several plans proposed for the government of America, and animadverted particularly to that of force; a method, which as it appeared simple and easy to comprehend, men were apt to have recourse to in all difficult cases. This idea he reprobated with great strength of argument. It depended upon times and circumstances, which were always changing and uncertain; it destroyed the very objects of preservation; it was a mode of governing hitherto unknown in the Colonies, and therefore dangerous to make trial of. Their flourishing condition, and the benefits we derived from them, were owing to quite other causes.

Without inquiring, therefore, whether it were a matter of right, or of favour, the only safe rule by which to govern the Colonies with advantage, was by giving them "an interest in our constitution," and by pledging the Parliamentary faith of the nation in the most binding manner, never to depart from the system by which Great Britain is solemnly to declare that she means to govern them.

All discussions of right should be disclaimed in such a subject: policy alone was to be considered. He was not inquiring whether they had a right to make that people miserable, but whether it was not their interest to render them happy? They were not to consult lawyers on what they might do, but to be guided by equity and sound policy in what they ought to do.



He declared pointedly against new projects. His theory with regard to representation was founded on the ancient constitutional policy of the realm, as contained in acts of Parliament; and the practice he would recommend, was conformable to plain facts, recorded in the journals of the House.

Experience had marked the road to be taken on this occasion; it had been followed with advantage and safety, until the present differences with America. In constitutional discussions practice was always a wiser counsellor than speculation: their ancestors, who had founded both the constitution and the Colonies, were the best guides they could follow for their preservation.

He gave an historical deduction of the manner of incorporating Wales, Chester, and Durham, with the rest of England, and of the good consequences this measure produced, in the readiness of their subsequent acquiescence in the laws enacted by the authority of Parliament.

Though Ireland had not been included in this incorporation, yet the English constitution had been fully communicated to that kingdom. The Colonies had received it as effectually as their situation would respectively permit. While the genuine spirit of this constitution remained unimpaired, peace and prosperity attended them; the moment an alteration was attempted, disorder ensued.

To return to our old policy, was therefore to tread on the surest ground. Our future system in America ought to be settled on a Parliamentary foundation, and ascertained in the clearest and most perspicuous terms, in order to guard against all possible innovations. Taxation was by this system to be established in the Colonies not by imposition from us, but by grants from them: their Assemblies were to be acknowledged competent to provide for the support of their government in peace,  
and



and to furnish public aids in war: the courts of judicature were to be absolutely independent; those of admiralty new regulated; and the acts of Parliament so much complained of, to be totally repealed.

These proposals were grounded on the non-representation of the Colonies in the British Parliament, the inconveniencies of their being represented at such a distance, the readiness with which they had always complied with requisitions lawfully made, to raise money for public services, and the superior utility of their granting subsidies, to the laying of taxes upon them by the authority of Parliament.

The debate on these propositions was long and spirited. The objections against them were, that they gave up the object in contention, as notwithstanding the right of taxing was not formally, yet it was virtually renounced. Should these proposals be adopted, there was no certainty that the Americans would answer them with any returns of duty and compliance.

As to their former provisions of money, during the late war, they proceeded evidently from the sense of the danger they were in. But if required to do it upon any occasion less pressing, and less connected with their immediate interest, it was much to be doubted whether they would have been so complying.

But exclusive of these considerations, it was the sole right and prerogative of Parliament to grant money to the Crown: no other body of men in the British dominions could participate in this right.—Such was the express declaration of the Bill of Rights.

This right of taxation was the ground-work of the dignity and power of Parliament. It could not therefore be given up consistently with any pro-



priety. Its very essence and existence depended upon this prerogative. A minister would deserve impeachment who should procure a pecuniary grant from the Colonies. Was such a practice to be tolerated, it would lead to much more danger than seemed to be apprehended; especially in case the Colonies should ever have the privilege of granting money at their own option.

In war, such a manner of levying subsidies might be permitted, as resulting from necessity; but without such an urgent cause, the constitution would evidently be exposed to danger, were the Crown empowered to receive supplies through any other channel than that of Parliament.

The exercising of this high prerogative of taxing the subject, was lodged in the discretion of that body. In this matter it was supreme, and questionable by no other power in the state. All other bodies and assemblies throughout the British dominions, whatever immunities they enjoyed in other respects, and however independent of Parliamentary authority, still were bound to implicit obedience in this.

It was replied, on the other hand, that the sole intent of the declaration contained in the Bill of Rights, was to prevent the Crown from levying taxes in the kingdom without the consent of Parliament; but did not mean to forbid the raising of them by lawful assemblies, in other parts of the King's dominions, for the public service.

By thankfully acknowledging the promptitude and willingness with which the American assemblies had passed considerable grants, Parliament had acknowledged their right of giving money to the Crown.

The meaning of the Bill of Rights, was to confine the power of the Crown, but not the liberality of the subject; the first was debarred from exacting money



money at pleasure, but the second was not forbidden to present it with what sums might be judged proper, either as supplies for public measures, or as an aid or income to defray the charges necessary to support the dignity and splendour of the throne; or even by way of gratitude and affection to the sovereign, for the benefits derived from his exertions for the happiness of his people.

The subsidies raised in this manner by the Colonies, having been equally abundant and productive of good consequences, having never been refused, when demanded in the usual way, and the Colonies testifying so much unwillingness to grant them in any other, it would be prudent to accept of them upon their own terms, rather than risk the losing them for ever, by putting at stake the possession of the Colonies themselves.

This danger, it could not be denied, the Parliament had brought upon the kingdom, by insisting obstinately, and needlessly, on a mode of raising money in the Colonies, which would not certainly produce more than that to which they had been so long habituated, and were equally resolute in adhering to, notwithstanding all the declarations and menaces of Parliament.

It was therefore high time to put an end to this absurd and pernicious controversy. Nothing could betray more absurdity than to quarrel about the shadow, when we were possessed of the substance. The ideas of supreme sovereignty, and national unity, were not combated by the Americans, provided an interpretation was made that did not trench upon such of their privileges, as, in their notions, were inseparable from a state of freedom. These privileges, it had been proved, were not injurious to this country, and the exercise of them had often proved serviceable to it. But if by supreme sovereignty we meant absolute power, and by



national unity, an obligation in them to conform implicitly to our will, why should we expect their admission of tenets manifestly repugnant to our constitution, and of which we had never bethought ourselves before this present occasion.

They acknowledged themselves united with Britain, and subject to its sovereign : they were willing to go proportionably as far as ourselves in their contributions for the common defence. Was not this subjection and unity, in the strictest acceptation of the terms ? Was it not the real substance of sovereignty and union ? All requisitions from them, on our part, beyond these essential and voluntary acknowledgments of our supremacy, were founded on speculative and imaginary rights, and tended, as experience had proved, to deprive us of solid benefits. We were throwing the most valuable advantages away, in the pursuit of empty and unavailing titles.

After a debate supported with great vigour and ingenuity of argumentation on both sides, Mr. Burke's propositions were negatived, by two hundred and seventy votes, against seventy-eight.

This rejection did not however discourage opposition from another attempt. A few days after the March 27, failure of that made by Mr. Burke, another gentleman of great knowledge and abilities, followed his example. This was Mr. Hartley ; who proposed that a letter of requisition should be sent to the Colonies by a secretary of state, on a motion from that House, for contribution to the expences of the whole empire.

This plan, it was represented, met those ideas of taxation that had so often been approved by the Colonies, and conformably to which former levies of money had been made upon them, to their entire satisfaction. It left them in the possession of determining



mining exclusively the propriety of the demand, and of limiting the sum, and directing its application.

The Parliamentary declaration against the raising of subsidies without its consent, was, by this plan, fully obviated, as the requisition would be their own act and deed. Thus the sentiments of both the contending parties would be reconciled; the Americans would be taxed, but in the manner most acceptable to their own feelings; yet as effectually as if Parliament had raised and assessed the supplies by its sole authority; and Parliament would have no reason to complain, when it saw that a simple motion in the House, operated as powerfully as if it passed an act to that purpose.

As this motion seemed to coincide with the opinion established in America, as well as with the interest of Great Britain, it was expected by many of its friends, that a favourable reception would have been given it, and that it might have proved a basis upon which to erect the superstructure of a treaty; but these expectations were totally frustrated, and the motion was rejected without a division.

The rejection of this, and the antecedent proposals, occasioned, mean while, much discontent throughout a great part of the nation. The character and abilities of the gentlemen who had framed them, were highly respected; and many people began to wish, with impatience, for the peaceable settlement of a dispute, from the continuation of which no good could possibly be expected; and which they were desirous should be terminated upon any terms.

But the partiality expressed for America by such numbers of people at home, did them much disservice on this as well as on some other occasions. Those who were of contrary sentiments, began to dread the consequences of favouring the republican opinions that had gradually become so current in the Colonies,  
and



and thought that it ill became the inhabitants of a country that had suffered so much from such principles, to give them any countenance by espousing the cause of those who professedly adhered to them. They looked upon this partiality as criminal, and were convinced, at the same time, that it was owing to the machinations of a party, which sooner than miss of a revenge for being discarded, would wreck it on their own country. The supporters of this party were looked upon by many as the propagators of those seditious maxims that had filled England with discontent, and had kindled a rebellion in America.

Experience, in some measure, authorised this opinion. So outrageous for many years had unhappily been the temper of all factions in this country, that they kept no measures in the prosecution of the objects they had in view, and employed, indiscriminately, all means whatsoever to attain them. Opposition was, in consequence of the persuasion that they were actuated by the same principles, accused of harbouring the most unjustifiable designs. As they were not permitted to rule the state, they were, it was said, determined to embroil it, and to render the power lodged in the hands of others, a source of continual vexation to them.

Influenced by such notions, many were those who entertained unfurmoutable suspicions of whatever was proposed that bore the face of benevolence to America. They thought the Colonies had rendered themselves by their behaviour, and the maxims of which they had occasioned the inculcation in this country, unworthy of all condescension; and that it would not be for the interest of Britain to enter into any treaty with them, till their republican spirit had been humbled. As this could not be effected any otherwise than by the superiority of the British arms, they heartily wished to see them employed  
for



for this end ; and they condemned all pacific and conciliating measures, as inefficient and dangerous before it was accomplished. They would not radically remove the evil ; it would only be palliated ; by not being crushed in proper time, it would gather additional strength, and break out on a future occasion with double violence.

Sentiments of this kind prevailed no less in Parliament : to these may principally be attributed the hostile spirit that influenced the concurrence of the majority in the measures proposed by ministry for the reduction of America.



## C H A P. XI.

*Further restrictions on the American Trade.—Petitions to Parliament for and against America.—Petition from the British Inhabitants of Canada.—Petition from the Quakers.—Remonstrance from the City of London.—Remonstrance from New York.*

1775.

THE resentment of Parliament against America seemed to gain ground daily. In addition to the bill of restrictions upon its trade, already mentioned, a clause was brought in, including the Colonies situated on the river Delaware.

The ground of this additional prohibition, was, that they were as refractory and culpable as the other Colonies, and that sufficient proofs of this had been brought before the House to justify this proceeding.

In the mean time, a variety of petitions appeared on both sides of the question from several manufacturing towns in Great Britain and Ireland; some contending for the necessity of coercive measures against the Colonies, others complaining of the bad consequences they had occasioned, and would still duce. The facts maintained by the respective petitions, created infinite controversy: they were asserted and denied with equal vehemence.

The opposition contended, that the petitions militating for ministerial measures, were promoted by persons who had no concern, or but a very distant one in the commerce with America. They were, it was said, of a party which had been long proscribed in this country; but which, unhappily for it, possessed a fund of obstinacy which neither time nor disappointments could overcome: they had seized  
this



this opportunity to revive the odious and exploded principles of absolute uncontrollable sovereignty, which had formerly done so much mischief: in a word, they were the Tories. From the intrigues of people of this description, proceeded those representations in favour of the violent resolves against America, which were now brought forth in order to counter-balance the weight of those addresses for peace and reconciliation which came from those who really traded with America, who had already felt, and experimentally knew how severely they should feel the loss or suspension of that necessary trade.

Among other petitions, one was presented to the Throne from the British inhabitants of Canada against the Quebec bill. It represented the trouble and expence they had undergone in settling themselves in that Province; that through their endeavours and industry, the value of that Colony was more than doubled since its acquisition; but that by the late act of Parliament they were, without having deserved such treatment, deprived of all the privileges of British subjects, and placed under an arbitrary government, contrary to the expectations and solemn promises which had induced them to settle in that country.

A like petition from them to the House of Lords was presented, and vigorously supported by Lord Camden, upon the principles of the English constitution, and the necessity of protecting the Protestant religion, at which a severe blow was aimed by the act in question: he called upon both the temporal and spiritual Lords to unite upon this occasion, in their respective characters of guardians of the laws and religion of the land.

Administration opposed him with no less warmth. The French inhabitants in Canada, were declared to be perfectly satisfied with that act; by which they considered



considered themselves as entirely restored to the same condition they were in when under the crown of France. They had expressed their satisfaction upon that account to General Carlton on his arrival in that Province in quality of Governor. They had transmitted an address of the same tendency to the King, acknowledging, in terms of the highest gratitude, their thankfulness for restoring them to their ancient rights and privileges. These were unequivocal proofs of the general contentment effected by that measure; and how impolitic it would be to repeal it in favour of about three thousand individuals, to the mortification of more than one hundred thousand.

After a long and animated altercation, the motion to reject Lord Camden's proposal was carried by eighty-eight votes against twenty-eight.

Another petition from the English in Canada, of the same tenor as the foregoing, was presented by Sir George Saville to the House of Commons. It stated, among other particulars, that the petition to the King, in the name of all the French inhabitants in Canada, in virtue of which the Quebec act had passed, was not obtained in a fair and open manner. So far from being countenanced by the generality of people, it had not even been communicated to them. It was handed about in a private manner, and signed by a few of the noblesse and lawyers, with others in their confidence, through the instigations of the Romish clergy. The community at large, it was notorious, did not approve it.

But the advocates for ministry contended no less strenuously for the propriety of attending to the addresses of large and avowed bodies, in preference to the uncertain and unauthorised surmises of private individuals. The Canadians were a numerous and warlike people, whose attachment it was prudent to secure amidst the universal defection of our  
own



own Colonies. By indulging them with a restoration of their own laws and usages, we made them our fast friends. This was certainly a just measure; as we might probably stand ere long in need of their friendship and assistance, in pursuance of the plan proposed for the reduction of our rebellious Colonies.

It was however intimated, that notwithstanding the unfavourable appearance of affairs in America, there were good reasons for hoping that tranquillity would soon be re-established upon durable foundations, without appealing to the sword. When our refractory subjects beheld themselves surrounded on all sides, when they saw our armies encamped on their shores, our fleets stationed along their coasts, their communication with other nations cut off, and their back-settlements threatened by those allies who were secured to Britain by the very act in question, and whose enmity they so much dreaded, and had so often experienced in former wars: in such a situation, they would hardly think of facing so many difficulties, and would probably be glad to accept of those offers that were still held out to them.

The issue of this debate was, that Sir George Saville was not more successful in the House of Commons, than Lord Camden had been in the House of Lords. His motion for repealing this act was rejected by a vast majority, one hundred and seventy-four, to eighty-six.

Notwithstanding the ill success of so many petitions, an humble, but firm one, was presented by the body of the Quakers. It spoke the language of peace and friendship peculiar to their persuasion, and recommended lenient measures accordingly:— But it declared, at the same time, their intimate persuasion, that in real attachment to the sovereign and royal family, to the constitution and people of his country, the Americans were exceeded by no subjects in the British dominions.

While



While petitions came from so many quarters, the city of London determined to give them that countenance which would arise from its weight and importance. It presented a remonstrance to April 10, 1775. the throne, in which the measures of the ministry were condemned in the most explicit and forcible language. It recapitulated all the articles of American grievances, and all the fatal consequences of them, that had been so frequently predicted. They looked with horror, said they, at the measures in agitation. Not deceived by the specious artifice of calling despotism dignity, they plainly perceived that the real purpose was to establish arbitrary power over all America. They justified the resistance of the Americans upon the principles of the English constitution. Animated by those principles, our forefathers brought about the Revolution; they wrested the sceptre out of the hands of the Stuarts, and placed the House of Brunswick upon the throne of Great Britain.

“ Your petitioners.” continued they, “ are persuaded, that the measures now pursuing, originated in the secret advice of men, who are enemies equally to your Majesty’s titles, and to the liberties of your people; and that your Majesty’s ministers carry them into execution by the same fatal corruption which has enabled them to wound the peace, and violate the constitution of this country. Thus they poison the fountain of public security, and render that body which should be the guardian of liberty, a formidable instrument of arbitrary power. Your petitioners do therefore most earnestly beseech your Majesty, to dismiss immediately, and for ever, from your councils those ministers and advisers, as a first step towards a redress of those grievances which alarm and afflict your whole people.”

This



This petition produced the following answer.

“ It is with the utmost astonishment that I find  
“ any of my subjects capable of encouraging the  
“ rebellious disposition which unhappily exists in  
“ some of my Colonies in North America. Hav-  
“ ing entire confidence in the wisdom of my Par-  
“ liament, the great council of the nation. I will  
“ steadily pursue those measures which they have  
“ recommended for the support of the constitutional  
“ rights of Great Britain. and the protection of the  
“ commercial interests of my kingdoms.”

Such, to the great concern of all reflecting men, was now become the stile of intercourse between the Crown and the people.

In the mean time, another remonstrance was pre-  
May 15, sented to the House of Commons from the  
1775. Assembly of New York. It was introduced by Mr. Burke, to whom it had been transmitted for that purpose. He represented in a strong and urgent manner, how greatly that province had signalized its attachment and fidelity to Britain in the midst of the present disturbances, and how much it had incurred the displeasure of the other Colonies upon that account. He assured the House that the remonstrance he wished to lay before it, was conceived in terms of the highest decency and respect.— Though it complained of some acts of Parliament, which in that Colony were deemed grievances, yet he was of opinion, the remonstrance ought to be received, that if any matter contained in it should appear to the House to need redress, it might be granted accordingly.

This application he considered as a circumstance improveable to the highest advantage in the present posture of affairs. It afforded an opportunity of coming to terms of reconciliation with America.— A direct channel was now opened to communicate through the medium of New York with the other  
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Colonies. The utmost care should be taken not to shut it, lest no other avenue should be found.

The ministerial objections were, that it was incompatible with the dignity of the House to suffer any paper to be presented that questioned its supreme authority. Condescension enough had been shown in a variety of instances; but nothing was admissible that tended to invalidate the right of taxation.

Particular notice was taken at the same time, that the title of petition did not accompany this paper: it was called a Representation and Remonstrance, which was not the usual, nor the proper manner of application to Parliament. This singularity alone was sufficient to put a negative on its presentation.

To this it was replied, that the times were so dangerous and critical, that words and forms were no longer deserving of attention. The question was, whether they thought the Colony of New York was worthy of a hearing? No Colony had behaved with so much temperateness and discretion. Notwithstanding the tempestuousness of the times, and the general wreck of the British authority, it had yet preserved a steady obedience to government.—While every other Colony was bidding defiance to Britain, this alone submissively applied to her for redress of grievances.

Was it consistent with policy, after losing the good-will of all the other Colonies, to drive this, through a needless and punctilious severity, into their confederacy against this country? could we expect, after such a treatment, that this Colony could withstand the arguments that would be drawn from our superciliousness, to induce it to relinquish a conduct which was so ill required.

This was not a season for stateliness and disregard with respect to those who professed themselves our adherents. Were even the refractory to make an appli-



application, it ought to be received with benignity. What countenance would the people of New York assume, when they were reproached for having put their confidence in this country? What excuse would the Assembly be able to make to its constituents, when accused of having deceived them with promises of favour from Britain, when it was seen that Parliament refused even to hear their humble and dutiful representations?

This refusal, it was predicted, would give the finishing blow to the British interest in America.—New York might from this day be counted among the hostile Colonies. What other line of conduct could that Province embrace, with any prospect of safety? Spurned by Britain, it would instantly forsake her, and wipe off the stain of having forsaken them, by the zeal it would henceforward exert in the common cause.

But the ministerial arguments against the acceptance of whatever derogated from the legislative power of Parliament, preponderated with the majority against all other considerations. The rejection was carried by one hundred and eighty-six, against sixty-seven.

After having been foiled in the House of Commons, it now remained to be decided whether that Colony's representations would meet with a more gracious reception in the House of Lords.

But here the difficulty was still greater than in the other House. The dignity of the Peerage was said to be insulted by the appellation under which it had been presumed to usher those representations into that Assembly. They were stiled a Memorial; such a title was only allowable in transactions between princes and states independent of each other, but was unsufferable on the part of subjects.

The answer was, that the lowest officer in the service had a right to present a memorial, even to



his Majesty himself, should he think himself aggrieved: with much more reason might a respectable body present one to the House of Lords. But exclusive of the general reason that entitled so important a Colony to lay such a paper before them, the particular reason of its fidelity, in spite of so many examples of defection, was alone a motive that ought to supersede all forms, and engage their most serious attention to what it had to propose.

After sundry arguments of the same nature, the question was determined against the hearing of the memorial, by forty-five Peers, to twenty-five.

Such was the issue of the efforts made by opposition in favour of the applications from New York. Numbers of people considered them as a ground, upon which to form a reasonable expectation of coming to some decisive agreement with this Colony; which might probably lead to a general treaty with all the Colonies. By such means only it seemed likely at present to bring about a reconciliation.

When the rejection of these applications in both Houses was announced to the public, a great part of the nation expressed the highest discontent. They now looked forward with dejection and sorrow at the prospect of mutual destruction that lay before them, and utterly gave up all other expectations.



## C H A P. XII.

*Transactions in America.—Preparations for war — Differences between the Congress and the Province of New York.—Proceedings in Massachuset.—Affair at Lexington.—Boston blockaded.*

1775.

**W**HILE Great Britain was preparing to enforce her decrees by force of arms, America was making ready to resist them in the same manner. The unanimity of Congress, and the resolution with which that body seemed animated, communicated itself to the whole continent.

The temper of the Americans on this occasion, was an object of universal astonishment. Their town meetings and provincial assemblies, spoke unanimously the language of men who were determined to do, and to suffer every thing sooner that yield to the authority that was claimed over them.

In this determination all ranks and denominations equally concurred. Poor and rich vied with each other who should encounter hardships and mortifications with most constancy. The rich gave up the luxurious and easy life they had hitherto led; and the poor willingly submitted to a retrenchment of those comforts which their industry and labour used to procure them.

This season of universal distress, exhibited a strong proof of what human nature is able to compass, when taken up with the pursuit of what has strongly excited its passions. Content and cheerfulness appeared in the face of all people, however disagreeable their condition appeared when contrasted with what it had lately been. The idea of having laid the foundation of that government, of



which the principles were so dear to them, inspired the leading men with satisfaction at their past proceedings; and the confidence with which the inferior classes relied upon the abilities of their rulers to overcome all obstructions, induced them to bear with patience the present evils, in hope of being amply recompensed in due time, by the enjoyment of ease and tranquility upon their own terms.

A great and powerful diffusion of public spirit was created by the difficulties in which America was now involved; and without adverting to the justice or badness of their cause, a noble strain of generosity and mutual support was universally exerted throughout the whole continent.

The people in the mean time had conceived sanguine expectations, that the petitions transmitted from Congress to the King would be attended with happy effects. They looked upon the address to the British nation as conceived in such terms, as would influence it in their favour. It was affectionate, yet firm and manly: it showed a disposition to friendship and reconciliation, and yet displayed a spirit utterly averse to servility; and though it expressed an abhorrence of passive submission, it no less declared a willingness to pay a reasonable and legal obedience.

Such was the opinion entertained by the Americans of the memorial penned by Congress to the people of Great Britain.

Whatever might be the secret views of some of the principal actors in these commotions, an infinite majority of the Americans aspired at no more than what their public declarations contained. This they considered as their just and lawful rights, of which they would not suffer a denial, and which they thought themselves authorized to assert and to obtain by every means they could employ.

But



But that which they all esteemed the principal means of inducing Great Britain to comply with their wishes, was the firm and determined union of America, the spirit with which the Congress had acted, and the vigorous proceedings that were taking place in every colony.

It was chiefly from these hopes, which appeared to them well founded, that they did not think it advisable to proceed to any more active measures at the present. The distance from Britain; the time and difficulties that would intervene in the raising and transporting from thence a body of troops sufficient for so great an attempt as the subjugation of America, quieted their apprehensions for the general safety. Were any measures pregnant with much danger to be in agitation, they relied upon timely intelligence, and could, in that case, readily put themselves in a posture of defence.

Such were the ideas of the generality; but the more intelligent were of another opinion. The firmness with which ministry had rejected, and still continued to reject all overtures on the side of opposition, that did not coincide with their plan, seemed a convincing proof, that nothing short of submission to the acts of Parliament which were the subject in contention, would satisfy the ruling powers in Britain. A determination to be obeyed was now the final resolve of the British Parliament; no less than a resolution to refuse obedience was that of Congress.

In that persuasion, those who were at the head of American affairs, judged it indispensibly requisite seriously to prepare for the worst; without transgressing, however, those bounds of moderation which they had adopted in their public declarations, and within which they thought it proper to keep, until they were compelled by events to act otherwise.



Pursuant to this intent, the militia was trained every where with great assiduity; and all those parts of exercise were peculiarly taught them, which, by the best judges in those matters, were esteemed the most essential.

These ideas and resolutions were confirmed, upon receiving information that arms and warlike stores were forbidden, by proclamation, to be exported from England to America. This left them no longer in doubt concerning the real intentions of the British ministry, and they immediately used every exertion to supply all deficiencies of that kind. To this purpose gun powder mills and manufactories for arms were erected in Pennsylvania and Virginia; and every encouragement was given them that could be afforded in their present circumstances.

The spirit of resistance continued in the mean while to actuate the people of Massachusetts as powerfully as ever. General Gage had issued a proclamation against the authority assumed by the Provincial Congress of that Colony; but it was totally disregarded. The people considered themselves as absolved from all further obedience to British government, and were entirely guided by the resolves of that Assembly.

A regular form of correspondence was now settled between Congress and the Provincial Meetings, by means of which the measures and motions of all the Colonies were universally directed.

The situation of Boston was daily becoming more critical. Expresses were continually arriving from that place, which represented it to be in the greatest straits and difficulties, from the superiority of the enemy that was in possession of it, and the little likelihood of being able to expel him. From the natural strength of its situation, and the additional works which were now completed, it was be-  
come



come too strong to be forced by any sudden attack, and would require a regular siege to be taken. The harbour and bay were occupied by a strong squadron of men of war, which left no expectation of relief on that side. The town was absolutely at the discretion of the garrison; and the inhabitants might be considered as imprisoned, and liable to be made answerable for the behaviour of the Province at large.

Various expedients were suggested on this occasion, in order to extricate the people of Boston from their difficulties, and thereby prevent so large a number of individuals from remaining in the hands of the enemy. It was first proposed to remove the inhabitants; but this was impracticable without the consent of the Governor, who would soon perceive the drift of such a measure, and act the more carefully for their detention. The next proposal was, to put a valuation upon the houses and effects of the inhabitants, set fire to the town, and indemnify the proprietors. But this, upon examination, proved no less difficult to accomplish than the former. It was therefore deemed most prudent to trust to time and opportunities, and to watch for both with the utmost vigilance: actual force appeared yet premature, and might produce much mischief without answering the end in view.

Numbers of the principal inhabitants had, by this time, quitted the place; some from motives of disgust, at their confinement; others from apprehensions of hostilities; and no few from fear of being called to account for their activity during the late disturbances.

The garrison, though not unprovided with absolute necessities, could not expect to be supplied with any refreshments or conveniencies from a people to whom their presence was so odious, and who  
viewed



viewed them as the instruments of tyranny, and the immediate cause of the miseries they were enduring.

After the dissolution of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, the friends of the British government met in several places, at the instigation of the Governor, in order to try what interest remained to Britain in that Colony; but the trial was very unsatisfactory: few were those who gave them any countenance. After some ineffectual associations and resolves, in opposition to the Provincial meeting, they found themselves unable to resist the superior influence of the contrary party: numbers overpowered them every where; and they were obliged to give up all hopes of counteracting them.

In the mean time, the proclamation forbidding the exportation of military stores to America, had begun to operate throughout the Colonies in the most decisive manner. They not only betook themselves to the fabrication of arms, and the manufacturing of powder, but in some of them they proceeded so far, as to seize on the artillery and stores belonging to government.

Newport, the capital of Rhode Island, was the place where these proceedings first commenced.—Forty pieces of cannon, mounted on the batteries that protected the harbour, were carried off by the inhabitants. The captain of a man of war, having waited upon the Governor, who in that Province is chosen by the Assembly, to inquire into the cause of such a proceeding, was explicitly told, that the people had seized them, that they might not be used against themselves by the British forces; and that they intended to employ them in their own defence, against any one that should attack them.

After taking this measure, the Assembly met, and agreed that arms and warlike stores should be purchased with the public money. Resolutions were passed for training the inhabitants, and every man  
was



was exhorted to prepare himself for a vigorous defence of the rights and liberties of his country.

The Colony of New Hampshire had hitherto acted with great moderation during these disturbances: but on receiving intelligence of the proclamation above-mentioned, and of the proceedings in consequence of it at Rhode Island, they resolved to imitate them. A large body assembled accordingly, and seized on a small fort, containing some artillery and powder. This happened in the month of December, seventy-four.

On the arrival of the King's speech, upon the opening of the new Parliament, and the addresses to the throne voted by such prodigious majorities, the spirit of resistance grew stronger than ever.— They had indulged themselves with an expectation, that reflecting on the calamities and dangers that must necessarily accompany coercive measures, the people of Britain would in their election of the new members, have insisted upon peace and reconciliation with America. But when they saw how decisively superior that party was which had resolved upon those measures, all their hopes of accommodation entirely vanished, and their whole attention was turned to the means of opposing force with force.

But notwithstanding these hostile appearances, there was still a large number of individuals who earnestly desired a pacific settlement of these unhappy differences. A convention was held in Pennsylvania, which declared it to be their fervent wish to avert impending calamities, by a restoration of harmony between Great Britain and her Colonies; and that they were ready to use their warmest endeavours to that intent. But this disposition, however sincere, was accompanied with an avowal of their resolution to take up arms in defence of what they demanded as their just rights, in case the British  
admi-



administration should proceed to acts of violence, in order to enforce submission to the acts against which they had remonstrated.

Conformably to this declaration, an unremitting assiduity was recommended in the prosecution of those manufactures necessary for their internal subsistence, as well as their defence: among which salt, gun-powder, steel, and salt-petre, were particularly mentioned. Similar measures were adopted in the other Colonies.

There was however one exception to this general association against Great Britain. The Colony of New York, in the Assembly held previous to the 10th Jan. rejection of its remonstrance, refused its 1775. concurrence with the resolutions of the Continental Congress, and determined for an application to the King and Parliament, in the manner that has been related. In this, it has been said, they were instigated by private insinuations from the friends to ministry at home; who flattered themselves, that the example of so considerable a Colony, would influence the remainder to an adoption of the same conduct. To this intent strong assurances were given that countenance would be shown to their addresses; in which case they would have the honour of being the first mediators of peace and reconciliation between the parent state and her Colonies. If there was any truth in this report, the event showed they were greatly deceived.

In the beginning of February, seventy-five, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts met at Cambridge, according to appointment. The Deputies who composed it, were men professedly known to be determined to carry the opposition against the British ministry to every length. None but such would have met with electors in the Province at this time; so strong was the inveteracy to the schemes pursued in  
England



England respecting the Colonies, and the hatred entertained for those who abetted them!

The first public act of this Assembly was to inform the people, that the temper of ministry and Parliament accorded in every measure that was planning for the destruction of liberty in America; and that there was every reason to fear that all petitions and addresses to the ruling men in England would be received with disdain. A powerful reinforcement of troops and ships of war was daily expected, of which the destination was against this Province in particular, whose warmth and activity in the common cause, had it seems, marked it out as the first object of British resentment.

They now therefore called upon the people to make good their determinations to adhere manfully to each other in the defence of their common freedom, and to behave in a manner that should teach their enemies they had not degenerated from those brave ancestors who had set them the example of laying down their lives for the liberty of their country. They reminded them in the most pressing terms, of the necessity of applying diligently to the perfecting themselves in the use of arms, and military discipline.

Among other military institutions adopted at this time in New England, there was one which deserves particular notice:—A number of the most active and expert among the militia were chosen out, whose business it was to hold themselves in perpetual readiness to be forth-coming at the first summons of their officers: hence they were called Minute-men: to do them justice, their subsequent conduct fully justified the appellation.

The season was now approaching for the Colonies to meet in Congress. Notwithstanding the evident loss of all its authority in America, the British government ventured to issue a circular letter throughout



out the Colonies, prohibiting under the usual penalties, the people from assembling together for the election of deputies to that meeting. But this effort of administration was useless; the elections were carried on every where with the utmost spirit and alacrity.

During the winter of seventy-four, there was a tolerable state of tranquility in the Colonies; but it was rather a suspension of the designs in agitation, than any real quiet. The knowledge of what was transacting in England had too much forwarned the Americans of what was to follow, to leave their minds at rest. Publications were daily appearing, wherein the conduct of Great Britain was described as tyrannical and impolitic in the extreme degree; and what was more opprobrious, has enslaved herself by the venality and baseness of a prostituted majority in Parliament, to the views of an ambitious ministry, deluded by false information into erroneous measures, and intending to erect an arbitrary system of government at home upon the ruins of liberty in America.

In consequence of so atrocious a design, the British nation was summoned to rise in its own defence, as well as in that of America; and not weakly to shut its eyes to a danger, that could not threaten the one without threatening the other. If the blow now aimed at America should bring her to the ground,—beware, said they;—let Britain look to herself;—the next blow is destined for her!—Instead of wishing for success to the arms of her ministry, she ought, on the contrary, earnestly to supplicate for defeat and destruction to them.

Such was the stile assumed in pamphlets, newspapers, and common discourse among the generality of people throughout the Colonies: they considered themselves as about to contend not for America alone, but the whole British nation; accusing  
sing



sing it, at the same time, of not deserving any protectors of a constitution, the defence of which they abandoned in so pusillanimous a manner.

All things were now hastily tending to that crisis which was daily expected. The question now seemed only in what manner hostilities should begin.—The troops in Boston were tired of being cooped up within a town, while their commission was to bring a whole country to obedience. They held the natives in contempt, and looked upon their military meetings with scorn and derision.

The people of Massachusetts, on the other hand, were fired with indignation at the ideas entertained of them by the British military, and loudly protested; that whenever they both met face to face, it then would be seen whether the Americans wanted courage, and whether their antagonists had any other superiority over them than that of meer practice and discipline.

These reciprocal taunts added fresh fuel to the animosity that actuated each party; and it was easily foreseen that hostilities were at no great distance, and that when they broke out, they would be attended with much inveteracy and destruction.

Towards the close of February, General Gage Feb. 26, received information that a number of field-  
1775. pieces had been brought to Salem. Judging from the proximity of that place, that some hostile designs were in agitation, in order to prevent them in time, he dispatched a body of men to seize the cannon at Salem. On their march they were obstructed by a river, over which there was a draw-bridge, which the people on the opposite side had drawn up, to hinder their passing, and refused to let down, notwithstanding the commands and threats of the officer at the head of the detachment. Upon this refusal, a boat was seized by the military to ferry them over; but the country people perceiving their intention, jumped into the boat, and cut  
open



open her bottom with axes: this occasioned a fray between both parties, which would probably have ended fatally, had not a clergyman interposed. He represented, on the one hand, to the commanding officer, the inevitable consequence of using force, and advised the people, on the other, that as it was late in the day, and impossible from that reason for the military to execute the orders they were sent upon, to let the detachment pass over the bridge without further opposition. His advice was complied with accordingly; and the military, after remaining some time in possession of it, withdrew, without being able to execute their orders.

This transaction, though of no consequence in itself, discovered the temper of the people; and showed at the same time how little they were to be intimidated. It showed, too, how disposed they were to rush to extremities, and how readily they would do it on the first provocation.

The time came at last that was to change these preludes to hostilities into more serious scenes, and to realize those apprehensions that had so long hung over the minds of all thinking men throughout the British empire.

It was now far advanced in April, and it was not doubted that the people of Massachusetts had formed a plan for action. A large quantity of military stores was collected at Concord, a town not more than twenty miles distant from Boston, and where the Provincial Congress was held. On receiving this intelligence, a detachment was sent from Boston in order to destroy these stores, and at the same time, as it was said, to seize on Mr. Hancock and Mr. Adams, the principal directors of that Assembly.

This detachment, under the command of Colonel Smith, and Major Pitcairn, set out from Boston  
on



on the 19th of April, before break of day, and proceeded with all expedition towards Concord, hoping to reach it before the country was alarmed. But notwithstanding the silence in which they marched, and the precaution of securing every one they met on the way, they found, by the continual firing of guns, and the ringing of bells in all the neighbouring villages, that they were discovered, and that people of course were assembling from all sides.

They arrived at Lexington about five in the morning, a place fifteen miles distant from Boston. The militia belonging to this town was exercising on a green adjacent to the road: an officer called out to them to throw down their arms and disperse; at the same instant some shots, it is said, were fired from a house. This occasioned a discharge from our people, by which several of the militia were killed and wounded.

The detachment then proceeded to Concord, where they destroyed the stores according to their orders. Here a skirmish ensued, when several were killed on both sides.

The country now rose upon them from all parts. During the course of a long and very hot day, they were exposed to a continual, though irregular fire, supported with great vigour and resolution. In the retreat from Concord to Lexington, a space of six miles, they were pursued with the utmost fury by a large body of the Provincials, and fired at in the mean time from the houses, walls, and other coverts.

By the time the detachment had reached Lexington, its ammunition was wholly expended. Here they had the good fortune to be joined by a considerable reinforcement under Lord Percy, sent to their relief by General Gage, from an apprehension of the danger they were in.



Boston lay, however, no less than fifteen miles off. Harassed already with the duty and fatigue of the day, the troops had yet this laborious march to perform, surrounded by enemies whose numbers increased every moment; who had the advantage of the ground, and could advance or retire at will. With all these disadvantages, the British troops made good their retreat, and arrived at Boston about sunset. The ground they had measured that day was above forty miles.

Thus ended the memorable affair of Lexington, famous for being the first engagement wherein the blood of British subjects was mutually shed by each others hands in America.

Notwithstanding it lasted a whole day, the number of slain and wounded on the British side was no more than two hundred and fifty, and of prisoners about thirty; a small loss when the prodigious superiority of the enemy is considered. The secret of the expedition had got vent: the whole country was in arms for forty miles round; and all the best marksmen in the Province were present in the engagement. The loss of the Americans, in killed and wounded, was about sixty.

The British detachment did not exceed two thousand men. They were excellent troops; but they were confined in a narrow road, flanked on each side, a great part of the way, with stone walls, low enough to fire over, and high enough to cover the assailants from the fire of men, who were marching with all speed, and had not leisure to stoop behind for any shelter, after giving their fire. Had it not been for two field pieces, brought with Lord Percy's detachment, the slaughter must have been much greater. As they were managed with great skill and activity, they repressed not a little the impetuosity of the Americans.

To



To do these justice, it must be acknowledged that in this first trial of their courage and military prowess, they behaved with great spirit, and fully refuted the charge of timidity, so unjustly cast upon them.

Imputations of inhumanity were reciprocally made upon this occasion. But charges of this kind are usual in civil war, where hatred and rancour are always more inveterate than between strangers; but if there was any truth in them, it is probable there was far more exaggeration. Whatever might have happened in the heat of battle, after the action was over, due sentiments of humanity took place; and the prisoners and wounded were treated with civility and care.

The news of this engagement raised the whole Province: crouds flocked from every district, and Boston was immediately surrounded on every side. So eager were the Provincials in their offers of service, that it was easy for their chiefs to collect numerous bodies of chosen men. They formed altogether an army above twenty thousand strong. Their line of encampment extended from Roxbury to Mystic, a space of about thirty miles, and was tolerably provided with cannon. Their commanding officers were Colonels Ward, Pribble, Heath, Prescott, and Thomas, who, though they might not perhaps have figured at the head of an European army, were men of undoubted bravery and resolution, and not inadequate to the charge they undertook.

They were joined soon after by a large body of troops sent from Connecticut, under the command of Colonel Putnam, an old American officer of noted intrepidity, and great experience. He had served in the two last wars, and distinguished himself by several actions, which required capacity as well as valour. He placed himself in such a position, as to



be able to afford timely succour to any part of the troops before the town that might want it.

The Provincial Congress was now removed to Watertown, about ten miles from Boston. Here they framed an address to the people of Great Britain, in which they entered into a minute detail of every circumstance relating to the affair at Lexington, and endeavoured to prove that the British troops were the aggressors both at Lexington and Concord, and had been guilty of many irregularities at both places. They relied on the good sense and generosity of the British nation, for a speedy termination of evils, which must in the consequence affect equally Great Britain and her Colonies. They expressed unshaken loyalty; but still persisted in declaring the most inflexible resolution never to submit to any species of tyranny. They solemnly appealed to Heaven for the justice of their cause, for which they now had, and would still continue to lay down their lives.

They next voted for the array and support of the army, regulated the pay of officers and soldiers, and enacted rules for its good government. In order to provide a fund for military expences, they voted a considerable sum to be issued in paper currency, receivable as money, the payment of which was secured on the public faith of the Province.

Among a variety of other resolutions, they passed one, by which they declared that General Gage was, by the late and preceding transactions, disqualified from acting in the station of Governor; that no farther obedience was due to him; and that he should henceforth be considered and treated as a public enemy.

As soon as the affair at Lexington was known, it kindled wrath and fury throughout all the Colonies. Notwithstanding they had been long prepared for such an event, yet it was received with as much apparent



parent astonishment and indignation, as if it had been wholly unexpected. It furnished them with an additional reason to quicken their warlike preparations, and to make ready for events of a similar nature.

But what was of more consequence, it enabled them to represent themselves as more formidable than had been suggested by their enemies. The courage manifested in that engagement by the Provincials, was now become the subject of universal conversation : it excited a prodigious spirit of emulation, and infused a degree of confidence to which they had not hitherto been used.

Those who had fallen in this action, were extolled as the first martyrs of public liberty : their names and families became objects of respect and veneration ; and they were pointed out as examples of necessary imitation in the arduous conflict wherein America was now engaged.

In the midst of this universal fermentation, plans of revenge against Britain were framing every where. The heads and hearts of all people in the Colonies were equally warm upon this occasion ; and they seemed, as it were, to vie with each other who should exhibit the most violent proofs of resentment.



## C H A P. XIII.

*Transactions at Boston.—Meeting of the Continental Congress at Philadelphia.—Its proceedings.—Crown Point and Ticonderoga surprized by the Americans.—Arrival of reinforcements at Boston.—Action at Bunker's Hill.—Consequences of the Quebec Act.—Further proceedings of the Congress.—Accession of Georgia to the American Confederacy.—General Washington appointed to the Chief Command of the American Forces.*

1775.

THE first mark of the public resentment of America, was a total stop to the exportation of all provisions from their ports. This they knew must bring infinite distress on the British islands in the West Indies, whose only dependence for their necessary subsistence, was on the importations of that nature from North America.

While they were thus universally intent on the means of prosecuting their revenge, the conciliatory propositions, moved by Lord North in Parliament, were brought to America. But this was no season for their reception: the people now entertained a rooted suspicion of every offer of that kind which came from England.

The first public body before which they were laid, was the Assembly of Pennsylvania. But here they met with a total rejection: they were represented as dangerous and unadequate to the wishes of America. The same opinion was adopted by the neighbouring Colony of Jersey; and, after the example of these, they were entirely rejected every where.

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In the mean while, the British troops at Boston were closely blocked up. They were cut off from all supplies of vegetables and fresh provisions, and reduced to subsist wholly on salt meat. The inhabitants were in the same condition. The Provincials were the more strict in the prevention of all supplies, as they intended thereby to compel the Governor to permit the departure of the town's people, whose number was too great to be maintained out of the stores appropriated to the garrison; or to suffer, at least, the women and children to depart, according to repeated solicitations to that purpose.

After much entreaty from the inhabitants, an agreement was at length concluded, by which they were to be at liberty to quit the place, and carry off their effects, on delivering up their arms. They cheerfully acquiesced in this proposal; but after making this surrender, numbers were, to their great disappointment, still detained; and those who had permission to depart, were obliged to leave all their effects. This reduced many genteel families to great indigence. The poor and the helpless, indeed, were all dismissed.

During these proceedings, the Continental Congress met at Philadelphia. They began their session with resolutions to raise an army, and to establish a large paper currency to defray the public charges, the Colonies in their united capacity becoming security for the payment of it in due time, in real money.

They next adverted to the means of distressing Britain most effectually in her American concerns. To this intent they strictly prohibited the supplying of the British fishery upon the Banks of Newfoundland, with any provisions whatsoever. Fully to effect this measure, all exportation was forbidden



to those Colonies in America that still remained in her subjection.

This was a proceeding wholly unexpected in England. It was severely felt among the British settlements, and shipping, at Newfoundland. In order to prevent a real famine, many vessels were necessitated to return home with all speed, to fetch cargoes of provisions for the subsistence of the people there.

While Congress was occupied in this manner, it received the agreeable news, that the people of New York had determined to join with the other Colonies, and to adopt the resolutions they had taken, and the measures they had concerted against Britain.

This Colony had long continued on a plan of moderation, in hopes of being able to bring about a reconciliation; but the affair at Lexington had now put an end to all such expectations. —Upon receiving the news of that engagement, numerous associations of the party inimical to Britain, was immediately formed, by which the Provincial Congress was elected.

As the situation of the city of New York lays it open to the sea, it was judged impracticable to defend it against a naval attack. For this reason it was thought most advisable, before the approach of a British squadron, which was daily expected, to secure the military stores, and to remove the women and children out of all danger. After this departure of so many individuals, whose presence would have incumbered them, the inhabitants provided for all other contingencies. In case they found themselves unable to prevent the enemy from taking possession of the city, their final determination was then to commit it to the flames.

While the Provinces on the sea coast were preparing for their defence, the people in the inland settlements



settlements of the Northern Colonies were not less occupied. Some active and resolute individuals, without waiting for orders, or communicating their designs to their ruling powers, concerted together a plan, which denoted the enterprising spirit that animated the Americans at that time : it was to surprize Crown Point, Ticonderoga, and the other forts that command the Lakes, which form the line of communication between the Colonies and Canada. Several persons, it is said, formed the same project unknown to each other, and fell in together on their way to execute it.

The principal conductors of this expedition, were, Colonels Easton and Allen : the body under their command consisted of two hundred and fifty men. At the head of these they set forward with great secrecy and expedition, and had the good luck to surprize both the garrisons of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, which fell into their hands without the loss of a man on either side.

The seizure they made on this occasion was very considerable : they found two hundred pieces of cannon, beside mortars, and a large quantity of military stores. They took two vessels completely equipped, and materials in readiness for the construction of others.

This successful expedition gave to the Americans entire command of those important passes for the possession of which so much British and French blood had been shed during the last war. It was in its immediate consequences, a heavy blow to the interest of Great Britain ; as, Boston excepted, she had not now a single hold left her in the revolted Colonies.

Towards the close of May, the long expected reinforcements arrived at Boston, together with the Generals Howe, Burgoyne, and Clinton, all officers



cers of approved merit, and whose behaviour in the last war had justly gained them much reputation.

By these arrivals, the troops now formed a large and respectable body : both the officers and soldiers were, without exaggeration, equal to any in Europe for discipline and valour. From the character of those who now commanded them, it was expected they would not long remain inactive, and that their operations would not be confined to so narrow a scene as Boston.

It was become in some measure necessary to extend the quarters of the army, for such at present the forces in that place might be reputed. The Provincials boasted that they were besieging those who had been sent to subdue them ; and as there was some truth in this vaunt, it was incumbent on our people to remove it.

Since the blockade began, some skirmishes had happened in the islands that lie in Boston Bay. They were occasioned by the endeavours of both parties to carry off the stock upon them : the Provincials had the advantage : they burned in the last, an armed schooner, left aground by the tide, and which the crew, after standing a heavy fire of musketry and cannon, were obliged to abandon.

It had been proposed immediately after the fight at Lexington, to lead the Provincials on to Boston, while their spirits were animated with the business of that day ; but this proposal was overruled by the consideration, that the storming of such a place would necessarily involve in one common slaughter, both the military and the inhabitants.

Other motives had probably their share in this prevention. The number of ships of war and armed vessels of all denominations that surrounded and guarded the town on every side, would have rendered such an attempt next to impracticable. The troops were numerous enough for a defence ; and  
from



from their skill and courage, added to the expectation of no quarter from an enraged enemy, would have made a most desperate resistance; they were well provided with artillery and ammunition, and knew perfectly how to use them.

Those, on the other hand, who commanded the Provincials, did not care to expose them to a repulse, which would probably have been attended with a dreadful slaughter. They had been witnesses to the causes that militated for them at Lexington, and were sensible of the difference between an engagement in close passes, and narrow lanes, where the enemy they attacked was avowedly retreating, and the facing of him on a ground he had chosen, and where he stood prepared to fight: were the Provincials in such a conflict to be defeated, it would throw a damp on their ardour that would be followed by worse consequences than the mere loss of men they would suffer on such an occasion: this might be repaired; but the diminution of spirit and alacrity, they were conscious, was the greatest of all losses in war, especially to men just entered into that arduous career, whom little successes would animate, but whom such an overthrow would entirely discourage.

While both parties at Boston were standing, as it were at bay, and watching each others motions, the Continental Congress was taking the most vigorous measures, and acting with a spirit that astonished all men who reflected that they were but in the infancy of their exertions.

They boldly passed a resolution similar to that upon which the British nation, a century ago, founded the Revolution. They declared that the obligation of obedience to the Crown of Great Britain from the Colony of Massachusetts, being dissolved by the violation of its charter,  
the



the people were legally at liberty to proceed to the choice of a House of Representatives, and a Council, in conformity to the spirit and substance of the charter thus violated.

They passed another resolution, by which they forbid the acceptance or negotiation of any bill of exchange, note, or order of any British officer or agent, or the supplying them with money; and prohibited the furnishing the British army or navy with provisions, or demands of any kind.

In order to evince how securely their protection and gratitude might be depended on by their friends and adherents, and at the same time to show how much they disregarded the frowns and displeasure of the British Court, they re-appointed Doctor Franklin Postmaster-General in America, an office from which he had been removed in England, on account of his adherence to the cause of the Colonies.

On the twelfth of June, a proclamation was issued by the British government at Boston, offering a pardon, in the King's name, to all who laid down their arms, and returned to their homes and occupations. Two persons only were excepted, Mr. Samuel Adams, and Mr. John Hancock, whose guilt was represented as too great and notorious to escape punishment. All who did not accept of this offer, or who assisted, abetted, or corresponded with them, were to be deemed guilty of treason and rebellion, and treated accordingly. By this proclamation it was declared, that as the courts of judicature were shut, martial law should take place, till a due course of justice could be re-established.

But this act of government was as little regarded as the preceding. To convince the world how firmly they were determined to persevere in their measures, and how small an impression was made by the menaces of Britain, Mr. Hancock immediately



ately after his proscription was chosen President of the Congress.

The proclamation had no other effect than to prepare people's minds for the worst that might follow. The appellation of traitors and rebels, was now the most honourable and safe in America: such as were suspected of fidelity and attachment to Great Britain, were in fact the most exposed to detestation and danger; and obliged, for the sake of personal security, to dissemble their real sentiments.

The reinforcements arrived from Britain, the eagerness of the British military to avail themselves of their present strength, and the position of the Provincials, concurred to make both parties diligent in their preparations for action. It was equally the desire of both; the first were earnest to exhibit an unquestionable testimony of their superiority, and to terminate the quarrel by one decisive blow; the others were no less willing to come to a second engagement, from a confidence they would be able to convince their enemies that they would find the subjugation of America a much more difficult task than they had promised themselves.

Opposite to the northern shore of the peninsula upon which Boston stands, lies Charlestown, divided from it by a river about the breadth of the Thames at London bridge. Neither the British, nor Provincial troops, had hitherto bethought themselves of securing this place. In its neighbourhood, a little to the east, is a high ground called Bunker's-Hill, which overlooks and commands the whole town of Boston.

In the night of the sixteenth of June, a party of the Provincials took possession of this hill, and worked with so much industry and diligence, that by break of day they had almost completed a redoubt, together with a strong intrenchment, reaching half a mile as far as the river Mystic to the east.



east. As soon as discovered, they were plied with a heavy and incessant fire from the ships and floating batteries that surrounded the neck on which Charlestown is situated, and from the cannon planted on the nearest eminences on the Boston side.

This did not however prevent them from continuing their work, which they had entirely finished by mid-day, when it was found necessary to take more effectual methods to dislodge them.

To this purpose a considerable body was landed at the foot of Bunker's-Hill, under the command of General Howe, and General Pigot. The first was to attack the Provincial lines, the second the redoubt. The British troops advanced with great intrepidity; but on their approach, were received with a fire from behind the intrenchments, that continued pouring during a full half hour upon them like a stream. The execution it did was terrible: some of the bravest and oldest officers declared, that for the time it lasted, it was the hottest service they had ever seen. General Howe stood for some moments almost alone; the officers and soldiers about him being nearly all slain or disabled: his intrepidity and presence of mind were remarkable on this trying occasion.

General Pigot on the left, was in the mean time engaged with the Provincials who had thrown themselves into Charlestown, as well as with the redoubt, and met with the same reception as the right. Though he conducted his attack with great skill and courage, the incessant destruction made among the troops, threw them at first into some disorder, but General Clinton coming up with a reinforcement, they quickly rallied, and attacked the works with such fury, that the Provincials were not able to resist them, and retreated beyond the neck of land that leads into Charlestown.

This



This was the bloodiest engagement during the whole war. The loss of the British troops amounted in killed and wounded to upwards of a thousand. Among the first were nineteen, and among the last seventy officers. Colonel Abercromby, Major Pitcairn of the marines, and Majors Williams and Spenlowe, men of distinguished bravery, fell in this action; which, though it terminated to the advantage of the King's forces, cost altogether a dreadful price.

The loss on the Provincial side, according to their account, did not exceed five hundred. This might be true, as they fought behind intrenchments, part of which were cannon proof, and where it was not possible for the musketry to annoy them: this accounts no less for the numbers they destroyed, to which the expertness of their marksmen chiefly contributed. To render the dexterity of these completely effectual, muskets ready loaded were handed to them, as fast as they could be discharged, that they might lose no time in re-loading them, and they took aim chiefly at the officers.

During the whole time of action, the Provincials were supported by continual reinforcements; these were clearly perceived by the numerous spectators of this engagement, on the tops of houses, and every rising ground in Boston. Thus when fatigued, they were relieved by others, who took their places, and renewed the fight with fresh vigour. In this manner it was computed, that first and last, upwards of five thousand Provincials were employed in the service of this day.

The great slaughter occasioned on the left of the British troops from the houses in Charlestown, obliged them to set fire to that place. The Provincials defended it some time with much obstinacy, but it was quickly reduced to ashes; and when deprived of that cover, they were immediately compelled to retire.

The



The valour displayed by the British troops in encountering and overcoming so many obstructions, did them the highest honour in the opinion of all impartial men. The intrenchments cast up by the Provincials, though the work of a few hours, were contrived with great strength and judiciousness; and to do them justice, they did not forsake them till after a very gallant resistance.

The man whose fall was most lamented among the Americans, was Doctor Warren, a physician, he was a gentleman in high reputation for his eloquence, and various abilities; he was one of the principal and most active members of the Continental Congress in the preceding year, and was at this time President of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts: he commanded the lines of Bunker's-Hill as a Major-general on that memorable day, and took his station in the redoubt facing General Pigot's attack. He fell bravely at the head of his men, just as he was pointing to, and reminding those about him, it is said, of the mottos inscribed on the American colours planted on their intrenchments; on one side of which were these words:—“*An Appeal to Heaven:*” and on the other the following—“*Qui transtulit, sustinet:*” Meaning, that the same Providence which brought their ancestors to America, would now support their descendants.

But notwithstanding the honour of the day remained to the British troops, the Americans boasted that the real advantages were on their side. They had, said they, so much weakened their enemies in this engagement, as to put an entire stop to their operations. Instead of coming forth, and improving their pretended victory, they did not dare to venture out of the trenches and fortifications they had constructed round Boston.

The only apparent benefit gained by the troops, was that they kept possession of the ground whereon  
Charlestown



Charlestown had stood; they fortified it on every side, in order to secure themselves from the sudden attacks that were daily threatened from so numerous a force as that which now invested Boston.

But this enlargement of their quarters, though it contributed to render their confinement less irksome, added not a little to the military duty they were obliged to go through, and in fact doubled their fatigues at a season, when the heat rendered them more painful than at any other. These, together with the want of fresh provisions, occasioned much illness among the soldiery.

The Provincials, on the other hand, to convince the troops how little their success had availed them, raised intrenchments on a height opposite Charlestown, intimating to them that they were ready for another Bunker's-Hill business, whenever they thought proper, and were no less willing than they to make another trial of skill.

In expectation of another attempt of the like nature, they covered the weakest parts of their encampment with strong redoubts, and extended their works close to those that had been erected by the garrison on Boston Neck, where they attacked and burnt a guard-house.

Their boldness increased to a degree that astonished the British officers, who had unhappily been taught to believe them a contemptible enemy, averse to the dangers of war, and incapable of the regular operations of an army. The skirmishes were now renewed in Boston bay. The necessities of the garrison occasioned several attempts to carry off the remaining stock of cattle, and other articles of provision they might contain. But the Provincials, who were better acquainted with the navigation of the bay, landed on these islands, in spite of the precautions of the numerous shipping, and destroyed or carried off whatever could be of any use: they even



ventured so far as to burn the light-house situated at the entrance of the harbour, and afterwards made prisoners a number of workmen that had been sent to repair it, together with a party of marines that guarded them.

Mean while, in order to remedy the distresses under which the garrison and shipping began jointly to labour, armed vessels were sent out, that made prizes indiscriminately of all the coasting craft laden with provisions that came in their way. The crews sometimes landed in quest of necessaries, but they met with great opposition, and were sometimes driven back by the country people. These proceedings occasioned much animosity on both sides.

Another cause of discontent, was the seizure of ships for breach of the regulations lately made, the owners making all possible resistance on the one hand, and the severest compulsion being used on the other. These unceasing contests produced many scenes of mischief, and the refusal of compliance with the established injunctions, brought heavy punishments upon some of the places on the coast.

While these transactions were taking place in the British Colonies, the Province of Quebec began also to participate in the public discontents: the act which had been framed for the regulation of that Province, produced effects far different from those that had been expected from it. The majority of the Canadians received it with the most evident marks of disapprobation, and cordially united with the British settlers in that government, in reprobating it as tyrannical and oppressive.

It had been confidently expected, that the goodwill and interest of the French Canadians would have been entirely secured, by thus replacing their government on its former footing. Administration had flattered itself that General Carlton, the new Governor, would have raised with all facility, a  
numerous



numerous body of troops in that Province, with which to co-operate with General Gage. So sanguine was that expectation, that twenty thousand stand of arms, and a great quantity of military stores, had been shipped to Quebec for that purpose.

But instead of expressing the least satisfaction at the frame of government transmitted to them from Great Britain, or any willingness to second the designs of ministry, they seemed decidedly averse to both.

They were now, said they, under the government of Britain, and would demean themselves peaceably and loyally; but were total strangers to the nature of the disputes between that government and its American dependencies, and it would not become them to make themselves parties in such disputes. Were the Governor to raise the militia of the Province, they would obey him so far as to defend it if attacked; but would not march beyond its precincts, nor attack their neighbours.

In this difficulty, application was made to the Bishop to influence the people, through the respect and deference they owed to his function and dignity, to a chearful acquiescence in the views of the British government. He was urged to issue an episcopal admonition to that end, to be read in churches by the priests to their parishioners: but he declined all compliance with such a measure, as contrary to the rules of the Roman clergy.

Some ecclesiastics however were found, who exerted themselves in the service of government, but with very little effect.

The principal efforts were made on this occasion by the Noblesse. As they reaped the chief benefit of the act, they thought themselves bound in gratitude to manifest their zeal and attachment to those who framed it: they accordingly were strenuous in maintaining the necessity, as well



as the duty, of not only paying a faithful and entire obedience to the laws enacted for the government of the Colony, but also of complying readily with the desires expressed by their superiors.

But the community at large stood immoveable in their determination to remain in a state of perfect neutrality between Great Britain and her Colonies. The truth was, that they had sufficiently experienced the superior advantages of a British government, to be desirous not to relinquish them. It was now almost fifteen years since the reduction of that Province: they had during that space, been treated with so much lenity, and had been so much benefitted by the increase of trade and business of all kinds, that they were fully convinced it was their interest to preserve their present, and to oppose whatever had a tendency to bring them back to their former situation.

In this persuasion, notwithstanding they passively submitted to the form of government imposed upon them by the British ministry, they refused to take an active part in forcing their neighbours to a submission, which they apprehended might terminate to their own detriment.

Neither is it improbable, that the more shrewd and thinking people among them might view the disturbances in the British Colonies, as a motive to induce the British ministry to treat them the more favourably, in order to retain their allegiance, and to prevent them from accepting those offers of coalition which were held out to them by the Colonies.

For this reason it might chiefly be, that though they acquiesced in the arrangements made for their internal government, they did not incline to proceed any further, and thought that by doing this, they had sufficiently testified their fidelity, and ought not to be required to do any more.

Possibly



Possibly too, the arguments that had been laid before them in the address transmitted to them by the Colonies, might have produced some effect, and gained over to these a number of partizans and well-wishers among a people, who were now acquainted with, and began to relish the English maxims of government.

In default of the Canadians, hopes were entertained of engaging the various tribes of Indians that lie on the back-settlements of the Colonies, to take up arms in the cause of Great Britain. Secret agents were employed for that purpose, and large presents were made to their chiefs and leading men, with a view to win their concurrence.

A strong and vigorous attack had been proposed on those parts that lay most exposed, as the most seasonable diversion that could be made in the present circumstances of the Colonies: it would have alarmed and thrown into confusion a considerable proportion of the Colonists, and would have much weakened those efforts they were obliged to make for their defence on the sea-coasts, where they were liable to be continually and closely pressed in many quarters.

But the endeavours of such as were employed on this occasion were not successful. The Indians were not by any means disposed to hearken to any solicitations tending to hostilities. They did not, said they, understand the nature of the quarrel; they were surprized that Englishmen should apply to them for assistance against each other; they respected them all, and could not distinguish who was in fault, whether those who dwelt in America, or those who lived on the other side of the ocean; they advised them to be reconciled, and not to shed the blood of brethren; it gave them serious grief and concern to behold such enmity among them; but



as they knew not whose cause was just, they would espouse the side of neither.

These secret negotiations were very alarming to the Congress: they knew the dangers that would arise from a war with the native Americans, assisted by the power of Britain: they had lately experienced how much mischief they could do alone. The importance of a good understanding with them in so perilous a situation as that of the Colonies awakened all their attention to prevent a rupture. In order, if possible, to obtain their good-will, they represented to them, that the English on the other side of the water, had formed the wicked design to enslave them; and that they had only taken up arms to defend their freedom: they hoped therefore, that as the original natives of America were the freest people upon earth, they would not assist in taking away that liberty from others, of which they were so justly fond themselves. Were the English against whom they were now fighting, to overcome their brethren in America, they would soon make slaves of all the other people in that country, as they were become so proud and haughty, that they would not suffer their commands to be disobeyed, however unreasonable and unjust.

With reasonings of this kind the emissaries of Congress found means to prepossess in their favour the minds of many of the principal Indians: they succeeded even so far, as to render it necessary for those who were employed on the part of the English, to consult their personal safety by withdrawing themselves.

Having thus provided for the safety of the weakest parts of the Confederacy, they were now at leisure to look forward with less anxiety, and to prosecute the residue of those measures, which would have suffered so material an interruption, had the



the endeavours of Britain succeeded in bringing the Indians upon them at this time.

Articles of confederation and perpetual union were solemnly agreed upon by the delegates of the various Colonies, assembled at Philadelphia. They were framed, with great unanimity, on that republican plan which flowed from the fundamental principles of the American confederacy.

They bound themselves and their posterity, for their common defence against their enemies, for the security of their liberties and properties, their personal safety, and their general welfare.

Each Colony was to retain a complete jurisdiction within its own limits; to enact laws and forms of administration, and enjoy independent sovereignty in all domestic matters.

For the more convenient management of general interests, delegates were to be elected annually in each Colony, to meet in Congress at such time and place as should have been agreed upon in the preceding Congress.

Where particular circumstances did not make a deviation necessary, it was to be understood as a rule, that each succeeding Congress should be held in a different Colony, till the whole number had been gone through, and so in perpetual rotation.

The power of Congress was to extend to the determining upon war and peace; the entering into alliances; the settling disputes between the respective Colonies, and the planting new Colonies where proper.

The Congress was to make such general ordinances as appeared necessary for the common welfare of the Colonies, and to which their particular assemblies could not properly be competent; such as the regulation of the common forces, and matters of general commerce or currency.



It was also to have the appointment of all officers, civil and military, appertaining to the general confederacy ; such as Generals, Admirals, Ambassadors, and others in like stations.

The charges of war, and all other expences incurred for the public service of the union, were to be defrayed out of the common treasury, which was to be supplied by each Colony in proportion to its number of male polls, between sixteen and sixty years of age : the taxes for paying that proportion to be laid and levied by the laws of each Colony.

The number of delegates from each Colony was to be regulated by the number of such polls returned ; one delegate to be allowed for every five thousand polls,

At every meeting of the Congress, one half of the members, exclusive of proxies, should be necessary to make a quorum. If any delegate was absent, from necessity, he should be empowered to appoint any other delegate, from the same Colony, to vote for him by proxy.

An executive council was to be appointed by Congress out of their own body, to consist of twelve persons ; four of whom were annually to be replaced by four others,

This council, of whom eight were to be a quorum, was, in the recess of Congress, to be entrusted with the execution of all the measures it had resolved upon ; to have the management all of the Continental business at home and interests abroad ; to receive application from foreign countries ; to prepare matters for the consideration of Congress ; to fill up, in the absence of that body, all public offices that fall vacant ; and to draw upon the treasury for necessary services,

No Colony was to engage in offensive war with an Indian nation, without consent of Congress.

The



The boundaries and lands of all the Indian nations were to be ascertained, and secured to them. No purchases of land to be made by private individuals, nor even by any particular Colony hereafter, without permission obtained from Congress.

Agents were to be appointed by Congress to reside amongst the Indians in proper districts, whose duty it was to be, to prevent frauds and injustice in the trade with them; and who were, at the public expence, to relieve their personal wants and distresses.

This confederation was to last until the terms of reconciliation proposed in the petition of the last Congress to the King, were agreed to, and the acts restraining the commerce of America repealed, till reparation was made for shutting up the port of Boston, the burning of Charlestown, and the expences incurred by the war, and till the British troops were entirely withdrawn from the Colonies.

When those events took place, the Colonies were to return to their former connections and friendship with Great Britain; but on failure thereof, the confederation was to be perpetual.

Such was the tenor of the fœderal union entered into with so much warmth and readiness by the Colonies. It was plain by the stile and manner they adopted in the wording of it, that they looked upon a reconciliation with Great Britain as a very doubtful event.

The action at Bunker's Hill had filled the Americans with much higher notions of their ability to resist the efforts of Great Britain than they had ever entertained. Notwithstanding the noted bravery of the British troops, they had found means to face them in a manner, which, though it did not place them upon a full equality of valour and discipline, yet showed that they were a formidable enemy; and that they knew how to make the most of every advantage.

This



This persuasion, which was certainly well founded, animated them to a surprising degree, and was a circumstance which operated with great force in all their deliberations: those of Congress, itself, took a bolder turn from this period. They had from the beginning been resolute and firm; but they now assumed an ardour and decisiveness, which indicated that they felt their strength, and were entirely confident, that by exerting it vigorously, they should be able to surmount all difficulties, and would not fail, with perseverance, to obtain the end proposed.

In this temper of mind they began to weigh the progress and actual circumstances of the cause for which they were contending, and came to a determination, that after what had passed, an explicit and formal avowal, and justification of what they had done, and intended to do, was proper and necessary.

To this intent they published a declaration, setting forth the causes and necessity of their taking up arms, and resisting, by open force, the authority and the government of Great Britain. This declaration was conceived in terms remarkably pointed and strong.

“Were it possible,” said they, “for men who exercise their reason, to believe that the Divine Author of our existence, intended a part of the human race to hold an absolute property in, and unbounded power over others, marked out by his infinite goodness and wisdom as the objects of a legal domination, never rightfully resistable, however severe and oppressive, the inhabitants of these colonies might, at least, require from the Parliament of Great Britain some evidence that this dreadful authority over them has been granted to that body. But a reverence for our great Creator, principles of humanity, and the dictates of common sense, must convince



vince all those who reflect upon the subject, that government was instituted to promote the welfare of mankind, and ought to be administered for the attainment of that end.

“ The legislature of Great Britain, however, stimulated by an inordinate passion for power, not only unjustifiable, but which they know to be peculiarly reprobated by the very constitution of that kingdom, and despairing of success in any mode of contest where regard should be had to truth, law, or right, have at length deserting those, attempted to effect their cruel and impolitic purpose, of enslaving these Colonies, by violence, and have thereby rendered it necessary for us to close with their last appeal from reason to arms. Yet however blinded that Assembly may be by their intemperate rage for unlimited domination, so to slight justice and the opinion of mankind, we esteem ourselves bound by obligations of respect to the rest of the world, to make known the justice of our cause.

“ Our forefathers, inhabitants of the island of Great Britain, left their native land to seek, on these shores, a residence for civil and religious freedom. At the expence of their blood, at the hazard of their fortunes, without the least charge to the country from which they removed, by unceasing labour and an unconquerable spirit, they effected settlements in the distant and inhospitable wilds of America, then filled with numerous and warlike nations of barbarians. Societies or governments, vested with perfect legislatures, were formed under charters from the crown, and an harmonious intercourse was established between the Colonies and the kingdom, from which they derived their origin. The mutual benefits of this union became in a short time so extraordinary, as to excite astonishment. It is universally confessed, that the amazing increase of the wealth, strength, and navigation of the realm, arose from  
this



this source ; and the minister who so wisely and successfully directed the measures of Great Britain in the late war, publicly declared that those Colonies enabled her to triumph over her enemies.

“ Towards the conclusion of that war, it pleased our sovereign to make a change in his councils. From that fatal moment, the affairs of the British empire began to fall into confusion ; and gradually sliding from the summit of glorious prosperity, to which they had been advanced by the virtues and abilities of one man, are at length distracted by the convulsions that now shake it to its deepest foundations. The new ministry finding the brave foes of Britain, though frequently defeated, yet still contending, took up the unfortunate idea of granting them a hasty peace, and of then subduing her faithful friends.

“ These devoted Colonies were judged to be in such a state, as to present victories without bloodshed, and all the easy emoluments of statutable plunder. The uninterrupted tenor of their peaceable and respectful behaviour from the beginning of their colonisation ; their dutiful, zealous, and useful services during the war, though so recently and amply acknowledged in the most honourable manner by his Majesty, by the late King, and by Parliament, could not save them from the meditated innovations. Parliament was influenced to adopt the pernicious project ; and assuming a new power over them, has, in the course of eleven years, given such decisive specimens of the spirit and consequences attending this power, as to leave no doubt concerning the effects of acquiescence under it.”

“ They have undertaken to give and grant our money without our consent, though we have ever exercised an exclusive right to dispose of our own property. Statutes have been passed for extending the jurisdiction of courts of Admiralty and Vice Admiralty



Admiralty beyond their ancient limits ; for depriving us of the accustomed and inestimable privilege of trial by jury, in cases affecting both life and property ; for suspending the legislature of one of the Colonies ; for interdicting all commerce to the capital of another, and for altering, fundamentally, the form of government established by charter, and secured by acts of its own legislature, solemnly confirmed by the Crown ; for exempting the murderers of Colonists from legal trial, and, in effect, from punishment ; for erecting, in a neighbouring Province acquired by the joint arms of Great Britain and America, a despotism dangerous to our very existence ; and for quartering soldiers upon the Colonists in time of profound peace. It has also been resolved in Parliament, that Colonists charged with committing certain offences, shall be transported to England to be tried.

“ But why should we enumerate our injuries in detail ? By one statute it is declared that Parliament can of right make laws to bind us in all cases whatsoever : What is to defend us against so enormous—so unlimited a power ? Not a single man of those who assume it, is chosen by us, or is subject to our controul or influence ; but on the contrary, they are all of them exempt from the operation of such laws ; and an American revenue, if not diverted from the ostensible purposes for which it is raised, would actually lighten their own burdens in proportion as it increases ours.

“ We saw the misery to which such despotism would reduce us. We, for ten years, incessantly and ineffectually besieged the Throne as supplicants ; we reasoned, we remonstrated with Parliament in the most mild and decent language ; but administration, sensible that we should regard these oppressive measures as freemen ought to do, sent over fleets and armies to enforce them.

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“ The indignation of the Americans was roused, it is true ; but it was the indignation of a virtuous, loyal, and affectionate people. A Congress of delegates from the united Colonies, was assembled at Philadelphia on the fifth day of last September. We resolved again to offer an humble and dutiful petition to the King ; and also addressed our fellow subjects of Great Britain : we have pursued every temperate, every respectful measure ; we have even proceeded to break off all commercial intercourse with our fellow subjects, as the last peaceable admonition, that our attachment to no nation upon earth would supplant our attachment to liberty : this, we flattered ourselves, was the ultimate step of the controversy ; but subsequent events have shown how vain was this hope of finding moderation in our enemies.

“ Several threatening expressions against the Colonies, were inserted in his Majesty’s speech. Our petition, though we were told it was a decent one, that his Majesty had been pleased to receive it graciously, and to promise laying it before his Parliament, was huddled into both Houses amongst a bundle of American papers, and there neglected.

“ The Lords and Commons in their address in the month of February, said that a rebellion at that time actually existed within the Province of Massachusetts Bay ; and that those concerned in it, had been countenanced and encouraged by unlawful combinations and engagements entered into by his Majesty’s subjects in several of the Colonies ; and therefore they besought his Majesty, that he would take the most effectual measures to enforce due obedience to the laws and authority of the supreme legislature. Soon after, the commercial intercourse of whole Colonies with foreign countries, was cut off by an act of Parliament ; by another, several of  
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them were entirely prohibited from the fisheries in the seas near their coasts, on which they always depended for their sustenance; and large reinforcements of ships and troops were immediately sent over to General Gage.

“Fruitless were all the entreaties, arguments, and eloquence of an illustrious band of the most distinguished Peers and Commoners, who nobly and strenuously asserted the justice of our cause, to stay, or even to mitigate the heedless fury with which these accumulated outrages were hurried on. Equally fruitless was the interference of the City of London, of Bristol, and many other respectable towns in our favour.

Parliament is next represented by them, as intent upon the prosecution of measures, calculated to sow divisions between the Colonies, in order to extort their money from them, with more facility, “at the point of the bayonet,” to use their own expression. The only indulgence left them, being that of raising, in their own mode, the prescribed tribute. “What terms,” add they, “more rigid, and humiliating, could have been dictated by remorseless victors to conquered enemies? In our circumstances to accept them, would be to deserve them.”

The declaration then proceeds to accuse General Gage of having begun hostilities, and to tax him with breach of faith in not fulfilling the conditions he had entered into with the inhabitants of Boston. They charged the military, at the same time, with the burning of Charles Town, and committing other outrages without necessity, and contrary to the laws of war.

They reproach the British government for endeavouring to instigate the French inhabitants of Canada, and the Indians, to fall upon them; and for  
exerting



exerting its utmost efforts to spread among them the complicated calamities of sword, fire, and famine.

“We are reduced,” continued they, “to the alternative of chusing an unconditional submission to tyranny, or resistance by force. The latter is our choice. We have counted the cost of this contest, and find nothing so dreadful as voluntary slavery. Honour, justice, and humanity, forbid us tamely to surrender that freedom which we received from our gallant ancestors, and which our innocent posterity have a right to receive from us. We cannot endure the infamy and guilt of resigning succeeding generations to that wretchedness which inevitably awaits them, if we basely entail hereditary bondage upon them.

“Our cause is just,—our union is perfect: our internal resources are great; and, if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable.

“We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favour towards us, that his Providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy, until we were grown up to our present strength, had been previously exercised in warlike operations, and possessed of the means of defending ourselves.

“With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world, declare, that exerting the utmost energy of those powers which our beneficent Creator has graciously bestowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabated firmness and perseverance employ for the preservation of our liberties, being with one mind resolved to die free-men, rather than live slaves.”

They next declare, that they mean not to dissolve the union so long subsisting between Great Britain and the Colonies; and that they have not raised  
armies



armies with the ambitious design of establishing independent states.

“ We fight not,” proceed they, “ for glory, or for conquest: we exhibit to mankind the remarkable spectacle of a people attacked by unprovoked enemies. They boast of their privileges and civilization, and yet proffer no milder conditions than servitude or death.

“ In our own native land, in defence of the freedom that is our birth-right, for the protection of our property, acquired by the honest industry of our forefathers, and our own, against violence actually offered, we have taken up arms: we shall lay them down when hostilities shall cease on the part of the aggressors, and all danger of their being renewed shall be removed,—and not before.”

They concluded by imploring Heaven to prosper them, and to dispose their enemies to reasonable terms of reconciliation.

Such was the celebrated Declaration of Congress, on their formally taking up arms against Great Britain. It was dated at Philadelphia, the sixth of July, 1775, and subscribed by John Hancock, as President of that assembly, and Charles Thompson, as Secretary; the first, a man who had eminently signalized himself in the American cause, having expended a large proportion of an ample fortune in its support; the second, a person of great knowledge and experience, and whom his abilities alone had raised to the employment he now occupied, and filled, during the whole course of this contest, with universal satisfaction.

This Declaration was carefully dispersed throughout the whole continent, and read in all public meetings with the utmost solemnity.

It was received by the Provincial troops encamped before Boston with extraordinary applause. The publication of it was attended with great military



pomp. It was read at Cambridge by the President of the College, in presence of all the principal persons of the Province of Massachusetts, and at the lines, by the principal clergyman in the army, who accompanied it with an animated address to the soldiers and officers, and a solemn prayer for the success of the American arms.

Nothing was more remarkable throughout the whole of this unfortunate war, than the religious manner with which the people of the Northern Colonies especially, encouraged each other to do their duty in the field. It reminded one of the similar methods so much recommended and practised among the opponents to the Royal cause, during the civil wars in this country, in the reign of Charles the First.

It was not only in the New England Provinces this religious fervour prevailed; it was strikingly conspicuous in both the Colonies of New York and Pennsylvania. The synod of Philadelphia and the City of New York held a formal meeting, wherein they framed a pastoral letter, which was publicly read in the churches, and contributed not a little to confirm the people in their adherence to the cause they had espoused.

It was drawn up with great circumspectfulness and decency, and breathed altogether sentiments of humanity and moderation, that did much honour to the composers.

After some general admonitions, and taking notice that the whole continent, with hardly any exception, seemed determined to defend their rights by force of arms. "It is well known," said they, "otherwise it would be imprudent thus publicly to profess, that we have not been instrumental in inflaming the minds of the people, or urging them to acts of violence and disorder. Perhaps no instance can be given, on so interesting a subject, in which political



political sentiments have been so long, and so fully kept from the pulpit; and even malice itself has not charged us with labouring from the press. But things are now come to such a height, that we do not wish to conceal our opinions as men."

After proper exhortations to those who went forth as champions in their country's cause, they proceeded, by earnestly requesting them to take every opportunity to express their attachment to the King, and to the Revolution principles, that seated his family on the British throne. They strongly recommended esteem and reverence for his person, as a Prince who had merited well of his subjects on many accounts, and had probably been misled into the late and present measures by those about him.— "Neither," added they, "have we any doubt but they themselves have been in a great degree deceived by false information, from interested persons residing in America."

They next reminded them that the Continental Congress consisted of Delegates chosen in the most free and unbiassed manner by the body of the people; that they ought, for that reason, to be treated with all respect, and their resolutions adhered to with fidelity and firmness, in order to enable them to bring out the whole strength of the vast country that had put itself under their direction.

They particularly recommended a spirit of humanity and mercy, in the midst of that warmth and impetuosity so unhappily attendant on a civil war; they entreated all men, when called to action, to shed no blood but through absolute necessity; and to cease fighting, as soon as the necessity was over.

The declarations of Congress, and the exhortations of the clergy, produced wonderful effects in the minds of the public. Convinced that they were fighting in a righteous cause, people took up arms every where with the utmost cheerfulness, and be-



haved in a manner that fully verified the maxim, that a persuasion of acting justly, will always inspire a man with courage, and supply the defects of knowledge and discipline.

After justifying its conduct to the world at large, the Congress determined to make a second appeal to the people of Great Britain. It was written in a very serious, solemn, and forcible stile. They seemed as if they considered it as a valedictory address to their fellow-subjects in Europe, and as if they entertained but faint hopes of ever forming again one people, under the same sovereign, united in one mind, government, and name, as before, and bound by one common interest.

“ Friends, countrymen, and brethren,” said they, “ by these, and every other appellation that may designate the ties which bind us to each other, we entreat your serious attention to this our second attempt to prevent their dissolution. Remembrance of former friendships, pride in the glorious achievements of our common ancestors, and affection for the heirs of their virtues, have hitherto preserved our mutual connection. But when that friendship is violated by the grossest injuries, when the pride of ancestry becomes our reproach, and we are no otherwise allied than as tyrants and slaves; when reduced to the melancholy alternative of renouncing your favour, or our freedom, can we hesitate about the choice?—Let the spirit of Britons determine.”

After referring to their former address, the statement it contained of the injuries they had received, and their hope that they would have been redressed, they complained that their expectations had been grievously frustrated. That after being deprived by Parliament of many of their most valuable rights, of those salutary laws which were transmitted to them by their ancestors, of those charters which in-  
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spirited these to settle in the land now inhabited by their descendants, after seeing whole Colonies condemned without form of trial, their trade destroyed, their inhabitants impoverished, soldiers encouraged to imbrue their hands in the blood of Americans by offers of impunity;—after those, and the other instances of oppression they had experienced, they did not imagine that any more would have been added to them; but to their grief they are now convinced, from the late measures of the British ministry, that its object is the reduction of the Colonies to slavery.

They appeal for proofs of this to the cruelty of restraining the people on the northern coast of America from their usual occupation of fishing, which to so many thousands was the only means of procuring a livelihood.

They appeal in the same manner to the prohibition of their trade with all other nations:—"But this," add they, "we consider rather as injurious to your opulence, than to our interest. All our commerce terminates with you; the wealth we procure from other nations is soon exchanged for your superfluities; our remittances must then cease with our trade, and our refinements with our affluence. We trust, however, that laws which deprive us of every blessing, but a soil which teems with the necessaries of life, and that liberty which renders the enjoyment of them secure, will not relax our vigour in their defence."

After adverting to the distresses of the people at Boston, the burning of Charlestown, the severities exercised by the British shipping on the seacoast of New England, the other calamities they were suffering, and the general harshness of the treatment they had experienced,—“To what are we,” said they, “to attribute this treatment? If to any secret principle of the constitution, let it be



mentioned: let us learn that the government we have long revered is not without its defects; and that while it gives freedom to a part, it necessarily enslaves the remainder of the empire. If such a principle exists, why for ages has it ceased to operate? Why at this time is it called into action? Can no reason be assigned for this conduct, or must it be resolved into wanton exercise of arbitrary power? And shall the descendants of Britain tamely submit to this?—No, Sirs! we never will.—While we revere the memory of our gallant, virtuous ancestors, we never can surrender those glorious privileges for which they fought, bled, and conquered. Admit that your fleets could destroy our towns, and ravage our sea-coasts, these are inconsiderable objects,—things of no moment to men whose bosoms glow with the ardour of liberty. We can retire beyond the reach of your navy, and without any sensible diminution of the necessaries of life, enjoy the luxury of being free.

“ We know the force of your arms;—and was it called forth in the cause of justice and your country, we might dread the exertion. But will Britons fight under the banner of tyranny? Will they counteract the labours, and disgrace the victories of their ancestors? Will they forge chains for their posterity?—If they descend to this unworthy task, will their swords retain their edge,—their arms their accustomed vigour? Britons can never become the instruments of oppression till they lose the spirit of freedom, by which alone they are invincible.

“ Our enemies charge us with sedition:—In what does it consist? In our refusal to submit to unwarrantable acts of injustice and cruelty? If so, show us a period of your history in which you have not been equally seditious.”

After denying the charge of aiming at independence, and mentioning their frequent complaints and solicitations for redress, “ What has been,”  
added



added they, “ the success of our endeavours? Our petitions are treated with indignity, our prayers answered by insults; our application remains unnoticed; and leaves us the melancholy apprehension of your wanting either the will or the power to assist us.

“ Even under these circumstances, what measures have we taken that betray a desire of independence? Have we called in the aid of those foreign powers who are the rivals of your grandeur? When your troops were few and defenceless, did we take advantage of their distress, and expel them our towns?

“ Let not your enemies and ours persuade you, that in this we are influenced by fear, or any other unworthy motive. The lives of Britons are still dear to us; they are the children of our parents. When hostilities were commenced, when on a late occasion we repelled their assaults, and returned their blows, yet we lamented the wounds they obliged us to give; nor have we yet learned to rejoice at a victory over Englishmen.”

After justifying their defensive proceedings, they declare that they have not lost sight of a reconciliation upon constitutional principles. They represent the benefits of their exclusive trade, and their willingness to submit to the restrictions on it that subsisted at the conclusion of the last war.

In answer to the allegation that they contributed nothing to the common defence, they asserted, that the advantages derived to Britain from the monopoly of their trade, far exceeded their proportion; but that if these advantages were, upon a fair computation, found inadequate, they were willing, provided the above restrictions were taken off, to contribute that full proportion, when constitutionally required.

They contended for the propriety of their refusing the plan of accommodation proposed by ministry in Parliament, as not leaving to them the disposal of their property, but only the collection of



the taxes imposed upon them in their own manner. —In order, however, to remove every imputation of obstinacy on their part, “we have,” said they, “again presented an humble petition to the King, requesting him to direct some mode, by which the united applications of the Colonists may be improved into a permanent reconciliation.

“Yet,” added they, “conclude not from this, that we propose to surrender our property into the hands of your ministry, or vest your Parliament with a power which may terminate in our destruction.

“The great bulwarks of our constitution we have endeavoured to maintain by every temperate, by every peaceable means; but your ministers, equal foes to British and American freedom, have added to their former oppressions an attempt to reduce us by the sword to a base and abject submission.

“On the sword, therefore, we are compelled to rely for protection. Should victory declare in your favour, yet men trained up to arms from their infancy, and animated by the love of liberty, will afford neither a cheap, nor an easy conquest.

“Let us now ask what advantages are to attend our reduction? The trade of a ruined and desolate country is always inconsiderable, its revenue trifling; the expence of subjecting, and retaining it in subjection, certain and inevitable. What then remains, but the gratification of an ill-judged pride, or the hope of rendering us subservient to designs upon your liberty?

“Soldiers who have sheathed their swords in the bowels of their American brethren, will not draw them with more reluctance against you. When too late, you may lament the loss of that freedom, which we exhort you, while still in your power, to preserve.

“On the other hand, should you prove unsuccessful, should that connection which we most ardently wish to maintain, be dissolved, should your  
ministers



ministers exhaust your treasures, waste the blood of your countrymen in vain attempts on our liberty, do they not deliver you weakened and defenceless to your natural enemies ?

“ Since then your liberty must be the price of your victories, your ruin of your defeat, what blind fatality can urge you to a pursuit destructive of all that Britons hold most dear ?

If you have no regard to the connection that has so long subsisted between us ; if you have forgotten the wounds we received fighting by your side for the extension of the British empire ; if our commerce is an object below your consideration ; if justice and humanity have lost their influence on your hearts, still motives are not wanting to excite your indignation at the measures now pursued : your wealth, your honour, your liberty are at stake.

“ Notwithstanding the distress to which we are reduced, we sometimes forget our own afflictions to anticipate and sympathise in yours : we grieve that rash and inconsiderate counsels should precipitate the destruction of so noble an empire, and call God to witness, that we would part with our property, endanger our lives, and sacrifice every thing, but liberty, to redeem you from ruin.

“ A cloud hangs over your heads and ours ;—ere this reaches you, it may probably have burst upon us. Let us, then, before the remembrance of former kindness is obliterated, once more repeat those appellations which are ever grateful in our ears ; let us entreat Heaven to avert our ruin, and the destruction that threatens our friends, brethren, and countrymen on the other side of the Atlantic.”

Such was the last address of Congress to the British nation. It was drawn up rather as a vindication of what they had done, and intended to do, than with any real expectation of producing the effect which was its ostensible intent. Those who fram-



ed it, knew too well the temper and disposition of those who influenced the councils of Great Britain at that time, to form any expectations of compliance on their part, with the requests it contained.

The petition to the King, mentioned in the foregoing address, was conceived in terms corresponding with the principles upon which this was founded.

It began by observing that the union between Great Britain and its Colonies, and the energy of a mild and just government, produced benefits so remarkably important, and afforded such an assurance of their permanency and increase, that the wonder and envy of other nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain rising to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known.

Her rivals apprehending the future effects of this union, if left any longer undisturbed, resolved to prevent her receiving such continual and formidable accessions of wealth and strength, by checking the growth of those settlements from which they were to be derived.

By their total defeat in the prosecution of this attempt, an additional force arose to Great Britain, through the vast enlargement of her American dominions, which placed her in a higher summit of elevation than ever.

At the conclusion of the last glorious war, the Colonists having, by their strenuous exertions, contributed remarkably to its success, and received repeated acknowledgments of their spirit and fidelity from both Crown and Parliament, doubted not they should, in common with all their fellow subjects, participate in the emoluments of those victories and conquests, in which they had bore so distinguished a share.

But while these honourable testimonials were still recent, they were alarmed by a new system of sta-  
tutes



tutes and regulations, adopted for the administration of the Colonies, that filled their minds with the most painful fears and jealousies; to their inexpressible astonishment, the danger of a foreign quarrel was now succeeded by domestic danger of a more dreadful kind.

This dangerous system was pregnant with consequences, which, though not immediately felt, tended, however, ultimately to affect the prosperity of Great Britain.

“We decline,” say they, “the ungrateful task of describing the variety of artifices practised against the Colonies, the delusive pretences, fruitless terrors, and unavailing severities, that have from time to time been employed in attempting to execute this impolitic plan. It were irksome to trace, through a series of years past, the progress of those unhappy differences that have flowed from this fatal source.”

But the King’s ministers persevering in these measures, and proceeding to enforce them by open hostilities, had at last compelled the Americans to arm in their defence, though with the highest reluctance, when they reflected whom they must oppose in this contest, and what might be the consequences of its continuance.

Knowing with what resentments and animosities civil discords are apt to inflame the contending parties, they thought themselves bound by every obligation, to use all the means in their power to stop the further effusion of blood, and to avert the calamities impending upon the British empire.

Professing, therefore, the most devoted attachment to the King’s person, family, and government, connected with Great Britain by the strongest ties that can unite societies, and deploring every event that may tend to weaken them, they solemnly declare themselves ardently desirous, that harmony may be restored and established upon so firm a basis,



as may perpetuate its blessings, uninterrupted by any dissensions, to succeeding generations, and transmit the King's royal name to posterity, "adorned," to use their very words, "with that signal and lasting glory that has attended the memory of those illustrious personages, whose virtues and abilities have extricated states from dangerous convulsions, and, by securing happiness to others, have erected the most noble and durable monuments to their own fame."

They assure the King, that notwithstanding their sufferings, they retain too high a regard for the kingdom from which they derive their origin, to request such a reconciliation as might in any manner be inconsistent with its dignity or welfare. "These," said they, "related as we are to her; honour and duty, as well as inclination, induce us to support and advance."

They besought him, therefore, to interpose his royal authority and influence, to relieve them from their present situation; submitting to his consideration the expediency of directing some method, by which the united applications of the Colonies to the Throne might be improved into a thorough reconciliation; and requesting, in the mean time, that hostilities should cease, and such acts be repealed as are more immediately distressing to the Colonies.

By forming proper arrangements for collecting the united sense of America, the King would receive such satisfactory proofs of the good disposition of the Colonies, as would soon induce him to restore them to his favour; and by that means enable them to evince the sincerity of their professions by every testimony of devotion to their sovereign, and of affection for their parent state.

After paying these farewell addresses, as they were not injudiciously called, to the King and people of Great Britain, the Congress thought it incumbent



cumbent upon them, not to pass by without a similar proof of attention and respect, so considerable a member of the British empire, as the kingdom of Ireland : a country that had, at all times, furnished America with numbers of useful inhabitants, and at this time, especially, with some of the bravest men in her service.

The address to the Irish nation, was written in the same forcible and pathetic style, as all compositions of that kind which flowed from the pens of Congress at this period.

After mentioning the importance and interestingness to all Europe of the contest in which the British Colonies were engaged, they express, the earnest desire of the Americans, to possess the good opinion of the virtuous and humane part of society, and state the motives and objects by which they are actuated.

They lament that, “ however incredible it may appear at this enlightened period, the rulers of a nation which in every age has sacrificed hecatombs of her bravest patriots on the altar of liberty, should presume gravely to assert, and by force of arms attempt to establish an arbitrary sway over the property, liberties, and lives of their fellow subjects in America.”

This attempt they accuse the ministry in Britain of having, by fraud and violence, pursued for the last ten years.—“ At the conclusion of the last war,” said they, “ the genius of England, and the spirit of wisdom, as if offended at the ungrateful treatment of her sons, withdrew from the British councils, and left that nation a prey to a race of ministers, with whom ancient English honesty and benevolence disdained to dwell. From that period jealousy, discontent, oppression, and discord, have raged among all the King’s subjects, and filled every part of his dominions with distress and complaint.

“ Not



“Not content,” continue they, “with our purchasing of Britain, at her own price, cloathing and a thousand other articles used by near three millions of people on this vast continent; not satisfied with the amazing profits arising from the monopoly of our trade, without giving us time to breathe after a long though glorious war, or the least credit for the blood and treasure we have expended in it; notwithstanding the zeal we had manifested for the service of our sovereign, and the warmest attachment to the constitution of Britain and the people of England, a black and horrid design was formed to convert us from subjects into vassals—from freemen into slaves—from friends into enemies.”

They next proceed to a circumstantial enumeration of their grievances; of their repeated and vain endeavours to obtain redress; of their determination to suspend all trade with Great Britain, Ireland, and the West Indies, as the ultimate measure left them; “hoping by this peaceable mode of opposition, to obtain that justice from the British ministry, which had been so long solicited in vain.

“And here,” say they, “permit us to assure you, it was with the utmost reluctance we could prevail upon ourselves to cease our commercial connections with your island;—your Parliament had done us no wrong;—you had ever been friendly to the rights of mankind; and we acknowledge, with pleasure and gratitude, that your nation has produced patriots who have nobly distinguished themselves in the cause of America and humanity.

“On the other hand, we were not ignorant that the labour and manufactures of Ireland, like those of the silkworm, were of little moment to herself; and served only to give luxury to those who neither toil nor spin. We perceived, that if we continued our commerce with you, our agreement not to import from Britain would be fruitless; we were there-



fore compelled to adopt a measure, to which nothing but absolute necessity would have reconciled us.

“ It gave us, however, some consolation to reflect, that should it occasion much distress, the fertile regions of America would afford you a safe asylum from poverty and oppression;—an asylum in which many thousands of your countrymen have found hospitality, peace, and affluence, and become united to us by all the ties of consanguinity, mutual interest, and affection.”

They next advert to their application to their fellow subjects in Britain, their patience and long abstinence from open resistance against the violent proceedings of the British ministry respecting Boston and the Province of Massachusetts, the rejection of their humble petitions, the insults offered to their character, and their “ long forbearance rewarded with the imputation of cowardice.

“ Our peaceable assemblies,” continue they, “ for the purpose of consulting the common safety, were now declared seditious, and our asserting those principles which placed the crown of Great Britain on the heads of the three successive Princes of the House of Hanover, were stiled rebellion.”

They complain that “ the wild and barbarous savages of the wilderness had been solicited to take up the hatchet against them, and instigated to deluge their settlements with the blood of innocent and defenceless women and children.”

Through those and the like means, “ the ministry, bent on pulling down the pillars of the constitution, has endeavoured to erect the standard of despotism in America; but if successful, Britain and Ireland may shudder at the consequence.”

They proceed to the commencement of hostilities, and charge the British military with being the aggressors,



aggressors, and with having carried the ravages of war to dishonourable extremities.

“ Though vilified,” say they, “ as wanting spirit, we are determined to behave like men ;—though insulted and abused, we wish for reconciliation ;—though defamed as seditious, we are ready to obey the laws ;—and though charged with rebellion, will cheerfully bleed in defence of our sovereign in a righteous cause !—What more can we say ?—What more can we offer ?

“ The various and fruitless offers we have repeatedly made, were not for pensions, for wealth, or for honours ; but for the humble boon of being permitted to possess the fruits of our honest industry, and to enjoy that degree of liberty to which God and the constitution have given us an undoubted right.

“ Blessed with an indissoluble union, with a variety of internal resources, and with a firm reliance on the justice of the supreme disposer of all human events, we have no doubt of rising superior to all the machinations of our enemies. We already anticipate the golden period, when liberty, with all the gentle arts of peace and humanity, shall establish her mild dominion in this western world, and erect eternal monuments to the memory of those patriots and martyrs who shall have suffered, fought, and bled in her cause.”

After some strictures on the conduct of ministry towards Ireland, they fervently hope, “ that the iniquitous scheme of extirpating liberty from the British empire, may be soon defeated ; but,” added they, “ we should be wanting to ourselves ;—we should be perfidious to posterity ;—we should be unworthy of that ancestry from which we derive our descent, should we submit with folded arms to military butchery and depredation.”

They



They concluded by appealing to the kind offices of their fellow subjects in Great Britain and Ireland for the restoration of peace and harmony. "Of their friendly disposition," say they, "we do not yet despond; aware, as they must be, that they have nothing more to expect from the same common enemy, than the humble favour of being last devoured."

Nor did Congress forget to transmit a letter of thanks to the City of London, for its interposition in their behalf. They had always placed a particular reliance on its good wishes and concern for their welfare; and though they knew that its mediation in the present circumstances would probably be of no efficacy, yet they were conscious it was their interest, for a variety of reasons, to retain as much as possible of its countenance, and to engage it by every motive in their power, to continue its disapprobation of the measures pursued against them.

This letter was short, but very spirited and decisive. They reminded the citizens of London of their having, in all ages, approved themselves the patrons of liberty, and the supporters of just government against lawless tyranny and oppression: that the cause of America was the more worthy of their support, as it involved the fate of the whole empire; that the Americans wished for a lasting connection with Great Britain on terms of equal liberty; "less than which generous minds will not offer, nor brave and free minds be willing to receive."

The island of Jamaica had acted too friendly a part for the Colonies, not to share in their remembrance on this occasion. They voted an epistolary address to the Assembly, which was conceived in the same stile and spirit as the preceding.

They determined, at the same time, to write a second letter to the French inhabitants of Canada.



As the first had been far from ineffectual, and had not a little contributed to raise a spirit of resistance to the British government, they promised themselves, not without reason, that a further application would tend to confirm them in those sentiments.

What chiefly induced them to this measure, was the intelligence they were daily receiving, of the repeated efforts made by government to stimulate the people of that Province to take an active part against the Colonies. They were apprehensive that the influence arising from the promises of remuneration, added to the pecuniary encouragement which the agents of Great Britain were so amply empowered to bestow, might, on this critical emergency, operate against all other motives, and prove at length over persuasive among a people, who did not look upon themselves as so deeply interested as the English Colonies, in thwarting the designs of the British administration.

The very superscription of their present address to the people of that Province, conveyed a full intimation of the sense they wished them to entertain of their condition. It was directed "To the oppressed inhabitants of Canada."

"Friends and countrymen," said they, "alarmed by the designs of an arbitrary ministry to extirpate the rights and liberties of all America, a sense of common danger conspired with the dictates of humanity, in urging us to call your attention, by our late address, to this very important object.

"Since the conclusion of the late war, we have been happy in considering you as fellow subjects; and since the commencement of the present plan for subjugating the continent, we have viewed you as fellow sufferers with us. As we were both entitled, by the bounty of an indulgent Creator, to freedom, and being both devoted, by the edict of a despotic admini-



administration, to common ruin, we perceived the fate of the Protestant and Catholic Colonies to be strongly linked together, and therefore invited you to join with us, in resolving to be free, and in rejecting, with disdain, the fetters of slavery, however artfully polished.

“ We most sincerely condole with you on the arrival of that day, in the course of which the sun could not shine on a single freeman in all your extensive dominion. Be assured that your unmerited degradation has engaged the most unfeigned pity of your sister Colonies; and we flatter ourselves you will not, by tamely bearing the yoke, suffer that pity to be supplanted by contempt.

“ By the introduction of your present form of government, or rather present form of tyranny, you have nothing that you can call your own. All the fruits of your labour and industry may be taken from you, whenever an avaricious governor and a rapacious council may incline to demand them.

“ You are liable, by their edicts, to be transported into foreign countries, to fight battles in which you have no interest, and to spill your blood in conflicts from which neither honour nor emolument can be derived. Nay, the enjoyment of your very religion, on the present system, depends on a legislature in which you have no share, and over which you have no controul; and your Priests are exposed to expulsion, banishment, and ruin, whenever their wealth and possessions furnish sufficient temptation.

“ It cannot be presumed that those considerations will have no weight with you, and that you are so lost to all sense of honour. We can never believe that the present race of Canadians are so degenerated from their spirited ancestors, as to permit the disgrace and infamy of such pusillanimity to rest



on their own heads, and the consequences of it on their children for ever.

“ Permit us again to repeat, that we are your friends, not your enemies; and be not imposed upon by those who may endeavour to create animosities. Our concern for your welfare entitles us to your friendship: we presume you will not, by doing us injury, reduce us to the disagreeable necessity of treating you as enemies.”

Such were the chief parts of this celebrated letter. It was, like the former, carefully translated into French, and numerous copies were printed and dispersed among the inhabitants of Canada.

Another object of equal importance hung still upon the mind of Congress:—This was the danger apprehended from the Indians. Notwithstanding the precautions that have been mentioned, to secure their good will to the Colonies, rewards and encouragements were still held out to them in various ways, in order to engage their assistance in the cause of Britain. Its emissaries, though checked by the measures taken against them, were still very active, and lost none of the many opportunities which a continual intercourse with the Indians afforded, to gain over all those whom views of present interest could seduce from their former resolutions of neutrality.

The Congress was sufficiently aware that the preservation of friendship with the Indians, was an object of the utmost moment. They were also duly informed, that no pains nor expence was spared to excite them to take up arms against the Colonies; it was therefore become more necessary than ever, to exert the utmost vigilance and efforts to strengthen and confirm the friendly disposition they had lately manifested.

In order to obviate the dangers that would ensue from the enmity of the Indians, a plan was formed



by Congress, whereby more permanently to secure their fidelity and adherence to the Colonies. They were divided into several districts, over which, persons well conversant in their language, ways, and manners, were appointed as commissioners. They were to maintain a continual correspondence with them; to watch all their motions; to be assisting to them in all their reasonable requests, and to supply them in their wants and necessities.

For this purpose a considerable sum was raised, and put into the hands of these commissioners, to be distributed among the Indians in their respective departments, and thereby to counteract the endeavours of the same kind that were used by their adversaries.

The principal tribes among the northern Indians bordering on the British Colonies, are those known by the name of the Six Confederate Nations, consisting of the Mohawks, Oneidas, Tuscaroras, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senekas.

It was, by Congress, thought highly advisable to hold a solemn conference with these people, in order to explain to them, in as clear a manner as possible, the nature of the contest subsisting between Great Britain and her Colonies, and to induce them, by proper reasons, to abstain from interfering in it, on either side.

The stile of the speech made to them in the name of the Congress, is, perhaps, the most curious specimen that ever was made public, of the manner and form of the political intercourse between the Europeans and the original natives of America.

It was as follows:—

“ Brothers, Sachems, and Warriors !

“ WE, the Delegates from the Twelve United Provinces, now sitting in General Congress at Philadelphia, send their talk to you, our brothers.



“ We are sixty-five in number, chosen and appointed by the people throughout all these Provinces and Colonies, to meet and sit together in one great council, to consult together for the common good of the land, and speak and act for them.”

“ Brothers, in our consultation we have judged it proper and necessary, to send you this talk, as we are upon the same island, that you may be informed of the reasons of this great council, and our disposition towards you, our Indian brothers of the Six Nations, and their allies.

“ Brothers and Friends, now attend :—

“ When our fathers crossed the great water, and came over to this land, the King of England gave them a talk, assuring them, that they and their children should be his children; and that if they would leave their native country, and make settlements, and live here, and buy and sell, and trade with their brethren beyond the water, they should still keep hold of the same covenant chain and enjoy peace;—and it was covenanted that the fields, houses, goods, and possessions which our fathers should acquire, should remain to them as their own, and be their children’s for ever, and at their sole disposal.

“ Trusting that this covenant should never be broken, our fathers came a great distance beyond the great water, laid out their money here, built houses, cleared fields, raised crops, and, through their own labour and industry, grew tall and strong.

“ They have bought, sold, and traded with England, according to agreement, sending to them such things as they wanted, and taking in exchange such things as were wanted here.

“ The King of England and his people kept the way open for more than one hundred years; and by



our trade became richer, and by an union with us greater and stronger than the other kings and people who live beyond the water.

“ All this time they lived in great friendship with us, and we with them ; for we are brothers—one blood.

“ Whenever they were struck, we instantly felt as though the blow had been given to us :—Their enemies were our enemies.

“ Whenever they went to war, we sent our men to stand by their side, and fight for them, and our money to help them, and make them strong.

“ They thanked us for our love, and sent us good talks, and renewed their promise to be one people for ever.

“ Brothers and friends, open a kind ear !

“ We will now tell you of the quarrel betwixt the counsellors of King George, and the inhabitants and Colonies of America.

“ Many of his counsellors have persuaded him to break the covenant chain, and not to send us any more good talks. They have prevailed upon him to enter into a covenant against us, and have torn asunder, and cast behind their backs, the good old covenant, which their ancestors and ours entered into, and took strong hold of.

“ They now tell us, they will put their hands into our pocket without asking, as though it were their own ; and at their pleasure they will take from us our charters, or written civil constitution, which we love as our lives ; also our plantations, our houses, and goods, whenever they please, without asking our leave. They tell us that our vessels may go to that or this island in the sea, but to this or that particular island, we shall not trade any more ; and in case of our non-compliance with these new orders, they shut up our harbours.



“ Brothers, this is our present situation. Thus have many of the King’s counsellors and servants dealt with us. If we submit or comply with their demands, you can easily perceive to what state we shall be reduced. If our people labour in the field, they will not know who shall enjoy the crop; if they hunt in the woods, it will be uncertain who shall taste the meat, or have the skins; if they build houses, they will not know whether they may sit round the fire with their wives and children: they cannot be sure whether they shall be permitted to eat, drink, and wear the fruits of their own labour and industry.

“ Brethren and friends of the Six Nations, attend!—

“ We upon this island have often spoke and entreated the King, and his servants the counsellors, that peace and harmony might still continue between us; that we cannot part with, or loose our hold of the old covenant chain, which united our fathers and theirs; that we want to brighten this chain, and keep the way open as our fathers did; that we want to live with them as brothers; labour, trade, travel abroad, eat and drink in peace: we have often asked them to love and live in such friendship with us, as their fathers did with ours.

“ We told them again, that we judged we were exceedingly injured; that they might as well kill us as take away our property and the necessities of life. We have asked why they treat us thus? What has become of our repeated addresses and supplications to them? Who has shut the ears of the King to the cries of his children in America?—No soft answer, no pleasant voice from beyond the water has yet sounded in our ears.

“ Brothers, thus stands the matter betwixt old England and America.

“ Not—



“ Notwithstanding all our entreaties, we have but little hope the King will send us any more good talks, by reason of his evil counsellors. They have persuaded him to send an army of soldiers, and many ships of war, to rob and destroy us; they have shut up many of our harbours, seized many of our vessels: the soldiers have struck the blow; the blood now runs of the American children; they have also burned our houses and towns, and taken much of our goods.

“ Brothers, we are now necessitated to rise, and forced to fight, or give up our civil constitution, and run away, and leave our farms and houses behind us: this must not be.—Since the King’s counsellors will not open their ears, and consider our just complaints, and the cause of our weeping, and have given the blow, we are determined to drive away the King’s soldiers, and destroy all those we find in arms against the peace of the Twelve United Colonies.

“ Brothers and friends, we desire you will hear and receive what we have now told you, and that you will open a good ear, and listen to what we are now going to say. This is a family quarrel between us and old England; you Indians are not concerned in it; we do not wish you to take up the hatchet against the King’s troops; we desire you to remain at home, and not join either side, but let the hatchet be buried deep.

“ In the name and behalf of all our people, we ask and desire of you to love peace, and to maintain it; and to love and sympathize with us in all our trouble; that the path may be kept open with all our people and yours, to pass and repass without molestation.

“ Brothers, we live on the same ground with you; the same island is our common birth-place.—We desire to sit down under the same tree of peace  
with



with you: let us water its roots, and cherish its growth, till the large leaves and flourishing branches shall extend to the setting sun, and reach the skies.

“ Brothers, observe well—

“ What is it we have asked of you? Nothing but peace, notwithstanding our disturbed situation. And if application should be made to you by any of the King’s ministers to join on their side, we only advise you to deliberate with great caution, and in your wisdom look forward to the consequences of a compliance: for if the King’s troops take away our property, and destroy us, who are of the same blood with themselves, what can you, who are Indians, expect from them afterwards?

“ Therefore we say, brothers, take care!—hold fast to your covenant chain: you know our disposition towards you, the Six Nations of Indians, and your allies. Let this our good talk remain at Onondaga, your central council-house. We depend upon you to send and acquaint your allies to the northward, the seven tribes on the river St. Lawrence, that you have this talk of ours at the great council fire of the Six Nations. And when you return, we invite your great men to come and converse further with us at Albany, where we intend to re-kindle the council fire, which your and our ancestors sat round in great friendship. Brothers and friends, we greet you all:—Farewell.

“ Brothers, we have said we wish you Indians may continue in peace with one another, and with us, the white people. Let us both be cautious in our behaviour towards each other, at this critical state of our affairs. This island now trembles;—the wind whistles from almost every quarter. Let us fortify our minds, and shut our ears against false rumours; let us be cautious what we receive for truth, unless spoken by wise and good men. If any thing disagreeable should ever fall out between  
us,



us, the Twelve United Colonies, and you, the Six Nations, to wound our peace, let us immediately seek measures for healing the breach. From the present situation of our affairs, we judge it wise and expedient to kindle up a small fire at Albany, where we may hear each others voice, and disclose our minds fully to one another."

Conferences were held, and speeches of a similar tenor as the above delivered to the various tribes of Indians on the back-settlements of the Colonies.

In the mean time, it was become necessary for Congress to come to a definitive resolution in regard to the conciliatory motion made in Parliament by the ministry. It had already been glanced at in the declaration they had published touching the necessity of their taking up arms, and represented in a very unfavourable light.

But the friends to this motion in England thought very differently, and were even so sanguine as to promise a kind reception to it, and that people in America would probably consider it as a preliminary to reconciliation.

In this expectation, a gentleman high in office, was directed by ministry to draw up a formal notification of their ideas upon this matter, in order to be communicated to Congress.

This notification gave them to understand, that it was earnestly hoped by all the real friends of America, that the terms expressed in the resolution which contained the conciliatory motion, would be accepted by all the Colonies who had the least affection for their King and country, or a just sense of their own interest.

These terms, it was said, were honourable for Great Britain, and safe for the Colonies. If these were not blinded by faction, such terms would remove every grievance relative to taxation, and be  
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the basis of a compact between the Colonies and the mother country.

The people in America ought therefore, on every consideration, to be satisfied with them. No farther relaxation could be admitted; as the temper and spirit of the nation were so much against concessions, that if it were the intention of administration, they could not carry the question. Administration, however, had no such intention; being fully and firmly persuaded, that further concessions would be injurious to the Colonies, as well as to Great Britain.

Congress was also informed by this notification, that there was not the least probability of a change of administration; which was at the same time perfectly united in opinion, and determined to pursue the most effectual measures, and to use the whole force of the kingdom, if it were necessary, to reduce the rebellious and refractory Colonies.

It concluded by assuring them, that there was so great a spirit in the nation against the Congress, that the people would cheerfully bear the temporary distresses that might follow from a stoppage of the American trade.

This intimation the Congress might depend upon as true, and in no wise calculated to deceive them, and serve the purposes of party.

The impression which was made on the minds of the Congress by this notification, did not correspond with the expectation formed in England: they received it with seeming indifference, and instead of taking it into immediate consideration, it was ordered to lie on the table with other papers.

It was full two months before the report of the committee to which they referred it, was brought into debate. It had been received on the thirtieth of May, and the Congress came to no formal opinion about it till the last day of July ensuing.

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The explicitness of the opinion they delivered upon this occasion, made full amends however for their tardiness. It was in every respect an ultimatum to all proposals on the part of Great Britain. It showed, at one view, the line of action finally embraced by America; it showed too that it was irrevocable, unless the superior strength of British arms should render it otherwise.

This opinion was, that the Colonies of America were entitled to the sole and exclusive privilege of giving and granting their own money; that this involved a right of deliberating whether they would make any gift, for what purpose it should be made, and what should be its amount: that it was a high breach of this privilege, for any body of men, extraneous to their constitution, to prescribe the purposes for which money was to be levied upon them, and to assume the authority of judging of their condition and circumstances, and of determining the amount of the contribution to be levied.

That as the Colonies possessed a right of appropriating their gifts, so were they entitled at all times to inquire into their application, to see that they be not wasted among the venal and corrupt, for the purpose of undermining the civil rights of the givers, nor yet be diverted to the support of standing armies, inconsistent with their freedom, and subversive of their quiet. To propose therefore that the monies given by the Colonies should be subject to the disposal of Parliament alone, was to propose that they should relinquish this right of inquiry, and put it into the power of others to render their gifts ruinous, in proportion as they were liberal.

That this privilege of granting or withholding their money, was an important barrier against the undue exertion of prerogative; which if left altogether without controul, might be exercised to their  
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great oppression. All history showed how efficacious its intercession was for the redress of grievances, and re-establishment of rights, and how improvident it was to part with so powerful a mediator.

That a suspension of the exercise of the power assumed by Parliament to tax the Colonies, being expressly made commensurate with the continuance of their gifts, these must be perpetual, to make that so: whereas no experience has shown, that a gift of perpetual revenue secures a perpetual return of kind disposition. On the contrary, the Parliament itself, wisely attentive to this observation, is in the established practice of granting supplies from year to year only.

Though desirous, and determined to consider in the most dispassionate view every seeming advance towards a reconciliation, made by the British Parliament, they still entreated their brethren of Britain to reflect, that had even acceptable terms been proffered to the Colonies, proposals that came accompanied with fleets and armies, seemed addressed to their fears, rather than to their freedom. With what patience would Britons receive articles of treaty from any power upon earth, when borne on the point of a bayonet by military plenipotentiaries?

They thought it unequitable, that the Colonies should be required to oblige themselves to other contributions than those which Great Britain received from a monopoly of their trade. This, of itself, was laying them under a heavy contribution. To demand therefore additional aids in the form of a tax, was to demand the double of their equal proportion.

If they were to contribute an equal share of taxes with other parts of the empire, they ought, of reason, to enjoy equally with them free commerce with the whole world. But while the restrictions upon their trade excluded them from the resources  
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of wealth, was it just they should bear all other burdens equally with those to whom every resource is open.

They did not think the British Parliament had any right to intermeddle with their provisions for the support of civil government, or administration of justice. The provisions they had made were such as pleased themselves, and were agreeable to their own circumstances : they answered the substantial purposes of government, and of justice ; and other purposes than these should not be answered. They did not mean that their people should be burthened with oppressive taxes, to provide sinecures for the idle or corrupt, under colour of providing for a civil list. While Parliament pursued their plan of civil government within their own jurisdiction, they hoped also to pursue theirs without molestation.

They objected to the proposals made to them, as implying only a suspension of the mode, but not a renunciation of the right to tax them ; neither did they imply any offer to repeal the late acts of Parliament so offensive to the Colonies ; on the contrary, while holding out these proposals to them, Parliament was actually passing other acts equally obnoxious.

Great Britain, in their opinion, still claimed, upon the whole, a right of demanding from the Colonies whatever she thought proper ; and of taxing them to the full amount, if they did not comply with the demand. But what was a claim of far higher importance, she challenged a right to alter their very charters.

They were persuaded, that when the impartial world reflected on the rapid succession of injuries, which, during the course of ten years, had been aimed at the Colonies, when it reviewed the pacific and respectful expostulations, which, during that whole



whole time, were the sole arms they opposed to them; when it observed that their complaints were either not heard at all, or answered with new provocations; when it recollected the declaration that Britain should not treat with America till she had brought her to her feet; when it considered the sentiments of enmity publicly expressed and avowed in Parliament against the Colonies; when it viewed the large armaments that invaded them, and the hostilities actually carrying on against them; when these things were laid together, and duly weighed, could the world call them unreasonable, or hesitate to believe them justifiable in their resistance?

At the time when the Congress drew up this answer to the conciliatory motion, their affairs wore a prosperous aspect. The Royal army had, ever since the affair of Bunker's Hill, been blockaded in Boston: death and illness had considerably weakened its strength; and the great superiority in numbers of the enemy, rendered it imprudent to attack them in the very strong position they were in, till fresh succours arrived from Britain.

The Americans, on the contrary, were daily increasing in strength, and acquiring experience:—the whole country lay before them; and provisions were cheap and plenty every where. All possible encouragements were given to those who took up arms; and, at present, the service was easy from the little force that Britain possessed in America.

All these circumstances emboldened Congress to declare its sentiments to the world without any further restraint. They thought it necessary to assume a stile of firmness and decision on this occasion, in order to forward the spirit of activity and enterprize which was exerting itself so diffusively among all classes, and to which was due that success in several undertakings, which partly induced  
Congress



Congress to behave so resolutely on this particular emergency.

They had now formed themselves into a regular train of government : hostilities having put an entire end to the authority of Great Britain, they were acknowledged every where, and considered themselves of course, as lawfully invested with the power of the state.

The dissensions prevailing in Georgia, had hitherto prevented that Colony from acceding to the general union. A powerful party subsisted there in favour of Great Britain, and long prevented its antagonists from carrying their schemes into execution, with the same facility as in the other Provinces ; but it was at length overpowered by a majority, that increased in a short time so considerably as to bear down all opposition.

A Provincial Congress assembled in the beginning of July, which adopted, in their fullest extent, all the determinations that had been taken by the general Congress of the present, and that of the preceding year. Deputies were appointed to repair to Congress, and to notify their desire to join the confederacy : they declared, that notwithstanding the acts of Parliament which affected the other Colonies in so oppressive a manner, had not been extended to them, they viewed that omission rather as a slight than a favour, and were too well convinced of the justice of the claims of America, and the propriety of all the colonies uniting in one body on this critical occasion, to remain separate from them, while invited by so many motives.

To tread, with perfect uniformity, in the steps of the other Colonies, they framed a petition to the King, containing representations and remonstrances similar to those that had already been transmitted to Britain from the other Colonies.



By this accession the Congress saw itself at the head of all the English Colonies of consequence throughout the continent, from the limits of Nova Scotia, to those of Florida; neither of these, from various causes, had it either in their inclination any more than their power, to join the American alliance. But their situation and circumstances were such, that as no benefits could be expected from them, so very little detriment was apprehended.

As troops were continually raising and training in every Colony, it was now deemed expedient to unite them more effectually together, by placing them under one head. To this intent it was resolved, that a General should be appointed to the supreme command of all the forces that should be raised throughout the continent.

Before such a resolution was taken, the eyes of all America were fixed upon a man whose character and fitness for so important and arduous a situation, was probably the chief motive that induced the Congress to declare it expedient and necessary.

This person was George Washington, a gentleman well known throughout the whole continent for his gallant behaviour during the last war. He had, at an early period of life, displayed a military genius that recommended him to the peculiar notice of those who were competent judges. His modesty was equal to his merit, and his disinterestedness no less conspicuous.

He was appointed, by the unanimous choice of the Congress, Captain General, and Commander in Chief of the American army, with as ample a salary as it was in their power to bestow, and with a very extensive degree of authority.

After accepting of their nomination with unfeigned reluctance, he generously declined all pecuniary emoluments. He earnestly desired every person present to remember that he acknowledged himself



himself unequal to so momentous a charge, and that he undertook it solely in compliance with their positive request.

No appointment could have been more popular. Exclusive of his personal abilities, he possessed an affluent fortune, which he enjoyed in a polite and hospitable manner. His disposition was friendly and affable, and his behaviour decent and becoming a man of rank. All these circumstances contributed to render him very much beloved among his acquaintance, and highly respected by the public.

It was in consequence of the reputation he had justly obtained by these various qualifications, that he was called, by the united voice of the people, to the important employment that was now conferred upon him. It was not only in Virginia, his native country, that he stood so high in the general esteem; his popularity was not less in the other Provinces, those of New England especially; and it was, at their particular application, that he was now raised to the supreme command.

The most fortunate circumstance attending his election to this office, was, that contrary to what usually happens in such cases, it was accompanied with no competition, and followed by no envy. It produced universal satisfaction. Every one voted him, as it were, the fittest man that could be found in America, for the purpose of raising their expectations, and fixing their confidence.

To speak impartially, he fully answered every hope they had formed. In the course of an arduous war, and in the midst of frequent and severe trials, he completely justified the opinion the world had entertained of his valour, conduct, and perseverance.

The appointment of General Washington was attended with other promotions:—Horace Gates, and Charles Lee, two English officers, much  
Z 2 esteemed



esteemed in the military line, were chosen, the first Adjutant General, the second Major General. Artemus Ward, Philip Schuyler, and Israel Putnam, American officers of known bravery and experience, were nominated Major Generals.

To these were added eight Brigadier Generals :— their names were, Seth Pomeroy, Richard Montgomery, David Wooster, William Heath, Joseph Spencer, John Thomas, John Sullivan, Nathaniel Green. They were all men of undoubted courage and capacity in their profession.

A very sufficient and comfortable subsistence was also provided for the officers and soldiers in the army, and every care taken to remove all occasions of complaint on that quarter.

In the beginning of July, General Washington repaired to the camp before Boston, in order to assume the command of the army that invested it. He was accompanied by General Lee. In every place through which they passed on their journey, they were received with every demonstration of respect. They were escorted by numbers of gentlemen, who had formed themselves into companies of volunteers, and honoured with public addresses from the Provincial Congress of New York, and that of Massachusetts.

The general Congress itself had given, as it were, the signal in what manner they expected the man they had chosen, to stand at the head of the union, should be treated. The day following his appointment, they resolved unanimously, in a full meeting, and in terms of great attachment and respect, that having elected him to the command of the forces employed in the maintenance and preservation of American liberty, they would assist and adhere to him with their lives and fortunes in the defence of that cause.

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This spirit of unanimity and resolution was diffused throughout the Colonies, in a degree that was never exceeded either in modern or ancient times. It produced the most extraordinary and wonderful effects. Persons of all ranks and all ages, were now totally taken up with martial occupations and ideas. Gentlemen of birth and affluence, mixed familiarly in the ranks with the common men, and went cheerfully through the same duties and fatigue.

At this memorable period, religious prejudices themselves gave way to the enthusiasm of patriotism. The meek and passive tenets of the Quaker persuasion, could not prevent many of their youth from entering into military associations, and learning the rudiments of war.

The number of men actually in arms at this time throughout the continent, was certainly very considerable: almost all men, indeed, that were able to bear arms, made it their business to acquire the use of them by constant practice and exercise, so far as the indispensable calls of their professions would permit them. Every day produced fresh proofs of the warmth and eagerness of all individuals to concur in this military spirit.

Among other particulars, one happened very worthy of being recorded, in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia:—A set of men associated, and formed a body, which, from its being composed of elderly people, was denominated the Old Men's company. It consisted of about fourscore men, all of them German emigrants, who had served in regular armies, either in Germany, or other parts of Europe.

The man whom they appointed to lead them to the field, on the first day of their muster, was near one hundred years of age. He had been forty years in the military line, and had been present in seven-



teen pitched battles. The drummer was eighty-four.

In place of a cockade in their hats, they wore a black crape, to denote their concern at those unfortunate causes that compelled them, in the decline of life, to resume the profession of arms, in order to defend the liberty of a country which had afforded them a retreat from the oppression which had forced them to abandon their own.

The very women became desirous, on this occasion, to signalize the zeal they felt in their country's cause. At a meeting of the gentlewomen belonging to the county of Bristol, in Pennsylvania, they made a large collection of money, to fit out a regiment raising there, and wrought a magnificent suit of colours for their use, with devices and mottos of their own composing. The gentlewoman who was appointed by the others to present them in their name to the regiment, made a very gallant and spirited speech on that occasion, which she concluded by giving it in charge to the officers and soldiers, never to desert the colours of the ladies, if they ever wished that the ladies should list under their banners.

Instances of this nature, though of little importance in themselves, serve, however, to denote the general disposition of a people. These instances were numerous in every part of America, and effectually contributed to keep up and increase the spirit of independence, and the determination to face all dangers in support of the common cause.

What assisted no less, perhaps, in fortifying this disposition, and animating all classes to emulate each other in the service of their country, was the praises bestowed on those that had fallen at Lexington and Bunker's Hill. Both these engagements were become topics of universal attention: every particular relating to them, and every incident that had be-



fallen the Americans upon each of those days, was dwelt upon with uncommon earnestness and avidity. Those who had fallen were commemorated with unceasing applause, and their names were ranked among those of the bravest and most illustrious patriots.

The prints and publications of the time, resounded, as it were, with the glory they had acquired for their country. The most elaborate eulogiums were penned in their honour; and whoever had expired with arms in his hands, was rewarded with every expression of gratitude that could be paid to his memory.

Among the subjects of this kind that exercised the zeal and ingenuity of the Americans, the death of Warren was the principal:—He was extolled as the Hamden of his day, and proposed as the most accomplished model of imitation, to all who, like him, were ready to devote themselves for the public.

A pathetic encomium of him was published at Philadelphia.—Its language and imagery were bold and spirited in the extreme.—“He is not dead,” said this encomium; “so excellent a citizen, so worthy a man, can never die. His memory will be everlastingly present, everlastingly dear to all men of principle,—to all lovers of their country. In the short period of thirty-three years of life, he displayed the abilities of a statesman, the qualifications of a senator, the soul of a hero!—All you that are interested in the cause for which he bled, approach his bleeding remains, wash his honourable wounds with your tears, and from the contemplation of his lifeless body, hasten to your homes, and there teach your children to detest the deeds of tyranny: lay before them the horrid scene you have beheld; let their hair stand on end; let their eyes sparkle with fire; let resentment kindle every feature; let their



lips vent threats and indignation ;—then—then—put arms into their hands, send them to battle, and let your last injunction be, to return victorious, or to die like Warren !”

Such was the temper of the Americans at this time, and such the means employed to cherish and confirm it. Those who consulted experience, foreboded, from the examples of past ages, that the resistance of such men would be formidable and desperate to the last, and would prove highly difficult, if possible, to overcome.



## C H A P. XIV.

*Transactions in Canada.—Chamblé, St. John, Montreal, taken by the Americans—Quebec attacked by Generals Arnold and Montgomery.*

1775.

THE prospect of affairs in America began now to afford a variety of ideas to the political part of the world. They saw a people who had long moved in a secondary light, assuming a power of which the augmentation was daily becoming more rapid. Instead of an humble and habitual subserviency to the views of that state from which they derived their origin, they now took upon themselves to direct their own motions; and not only to differ in opinion, but to oppose all its commands, and bid open defiance to its authority.

They beheld them advancing speedily to the completion of the design they had formed of establishing a system of government totally repugnant to the ideas of the parent state; but what was more alarming to those who reflected upon the natural disposition of men to enlarge their views in proportion to their successes, they clearly perceived, that having attained this primary object, they would extend their desires still farther; especially when they had tried their own strength, and found themselves able to maintain their ground against all foreign invasion.

Whether these ideas began early to operate among the leading persons in America, may be a matter of some doubt; but that they should very soon present themselves to their minds, can hardly be called in question, when it is considered that they had



had the precedents of so many ages before them, and that ambition quickly takes possession of men who happen to succeed in the beginning of any great enterprize.

The undertaking which the people of America had first in contemplation, was to ascertain beyond the power of encroachment on the part of Great Britain, the right of levying taxes upon themselves: they viewed the exclusive exercise of this right, free from all extraneous interference, in the same light as the British Parliament views its own privilege of raising money independently of the Crown.

Great Britain appeared to the Americans, to stand in the same relation to them, as its Monarch does in respect to the Parliament. His power is bounded by that great barrier of liberty, the privilege of granting money. While this remains in the hands of the people, their freedom rests on a secure foundation; the moment it is violated, their liberty is in danger.

In the same manner America, in order to be stiled a free country, must also enjoy the exclusive prerogative of imposing taxes upon its own inhabitants. Otherwise it would be in the same condition as the Parliament, were this assembly subjected to arbitrary exactions from the Crown.

Whether this representation was well founded or not, Great Britain did not think proper to admit of it. The contest was now, therefore, whose decision should stand good, that of Parliament, or that of the Congress.

It was certainly a bold attempt to endeavour, by force of arms, to invalidate the decrees of so potent and formidable a body of men as the British Parliament; certain it was, however, that hitherto the resistance of America had been successful.

Britain now plainly discovered that no common exertions would suffice to bring her with honour  
out



out of this quarrel. She now began to behold it in a far more serious light than it had appeared at first; but her spirit was too great to bend beneath the prospect of danger. She had so often been used to contend with the greatest difficulties, that she hoped this unexpected one, though it might involve her in a violent struggle, still would, like many others, add to her glory by surmounting it.

Though reconciliation was proffered by America, the terms, instead of according with those she had already offered, were diametrically the reverse. To offer a reconciliation of this kind she viewed as a declaration of war. In this mind, her pride was too great to submit to the dictates of her inferior, and no sufferings or distresses appeared so mortifying as such a submission.

America was, on the other hand, obstinately determined to refuse the conditions tendered by Great Britain; and to adhere inflexibly to her own. By this determination she seemed indifferent which of the two Britain would make choice of, peace or war; preferring the latter, rather than resign herself to the discretion of an opponent.

It was not that she apprehended any severities for what was past: she was conscious that Britain would, for its own sake, treat her with mildness and lenity: harshness would only tend to renew and embitter the quarrel. But the truth was, that her spirit was equal to that of her parent state. She thought herself entitled to all the demands she made: they were concessions, indeed, on the part of Britain; but they were founded on the clearest equity, and could not therefore be disgraceful to them by whom they were made: they were an act of justice, and not of humiliation.—Such was the persuasion of America.

Those



Those who were well acquainted with the respective tempers of the English and of the Americans, never hesitated in pronouncing that the contest would be the most serious and interesting that England ever knew, since she first began to assert her own rights against absolute power.

It was long before people in this island could be persuaded, that this unhappy quarrel would be attended with any effusion of blood. It was with the utmost astonishment that numbers of the most sensible and enlightened men in this country, received the news that the Americans had dared to face the British military at Lexington, and had made so terrible a slaughter of them at Bunker's Hill.

But this astonishment was mixed with an anger and indignation that inflamed people's minds with resentment, instead of causing the least apprehension. Such, indeed, has always been the character of the British nation: difficulties and perils have always served to rouse instead of depressing its native spirit and resolution.

Flushed in the mean time with the successful appearance of their affairs, the Americans were exerting their activity in improving every advantage they had gained. They now saw the whole continent, from Nova Scotia to Florida, entirely in their own possession. They looked upon the troops at Boston to be in such a condition, as rather to wish for a release from their sufferings, by being permitted to retire from that town unmolested, than as inclined, or able, to venture an attack upon the powerful army that surrounded them.

In this prosperous state of their circumstances, they now determined to confine themselves no longer to defensive measures. Casting their eyes on the various parts of the British empire in America, that lay most open to an hostile attempt, and from whence, in case of success, they should derive most benefit,



benefit, as well as reputation, Canada, now called the Province of Quebec, appeared the most likely to answer their wishes and expectations.

It was indeed inhabited by a people who had long been their natural enemies; but conquest and habit had now for a series of years familiarized them to the manners and ideas of the English. Though of a different religion, the mild and tolerant disposition of the British government in matters of this nature, had entirely quieted all apprehensions on that account. They had too, during a long space, enjoyed the advantages of an easy and equitable system of ruling, and began to feel an attachment to it, founded on the best of reasons, the benefits and domestic happiness it had procured them. Though averse to broils, and willing to obey without murmur, they plainly perceived that the late regulations introduced among them, were intended to render their Province totally dependent on the ministry, and to make the inhabitants subservient to its designs against the English Colonies.

Though the clergy and the noblesse were in the interest of the ministry; it was far otherwise among the inferior orders. They were almost to a man displeased with the accession of authority accruing to their superiors in consequence of the act lately passed. They remembered with what haughtiness these had comported themselves in former days, when under the dominion of France. They did not therefore wish for a return of that dependence and vassalage under which the bulk of the Canadian people had so long been kept, to the great impoverishment and oppression of the community, and the evident obstruction of the general prosperity of the Province.

The number of individuals who had removed from the Colonies into that Province, and the many others who had gone over to it from Britain, had powerfully contributed to confirm those dispositions



tions in the French inhabitants. The late subversion of the English laws, was considered by the British settlers as an act utterly unjustifiable. As long custom emboldened these to speak their minds with uncontrollable freedom, they represented to the Canadians that they were treated in the most unwarrantable manner, and that they were by no means bound to submit to the new forms of administration framed for them by Parliament, as they were totally repugnant to the spirit of the English constitution, and absolutely illegal.

They further represented this act as founded on falsehood and deception: it was obtained by their secret enemies, the noblesse, who had basely made use of their name, to induce the British ministry to procure the passing of it, as an acceptable deed to the generality of the Canadians.

This unworthy and surreptitious manner of ill-treating their countrymen, ought therefore to be resented, if the community meant to prevent the repetition of that tyranny which they had so long endured, and fruitlessly complained of, till kind fortune placed them under the influence of an English government, the spirit of which did not allow any part of the community to oppress the other. But this oppression would now return, and be felt more heavily than before, if they did not unite in defence of their just and natural rights, and manfully resist all species of tyranny.

With speeches and representations of this kind did the opponents of ministry in Canada inflame the minds of the people against the measures proposed by government in the planning of the Quebec act. Nor were insinuations wanting at the same time, from those who secretly wished well to the Colonies, how fair an opportunity the Canadians had at this present time to emancipate themselves wholly from the shackles imposed on them by that act. Were they



they now to hearken to the friendly advice contained in the addresses made to them by Congress, they need never after apprehend ill-usage from Britain, or any other power, and would at once provide for an uninterrupted continuance of domestic tranquillity and happiness.

The Congress was perfectly acquainted with the discontents of the Canadians, and of their averfeness to act against the Colonies: they knew that the British settlers in that Province were, with few exceptions, inclined to favour them, if it could be done with safety to themselves; and that what chiefly retained them in obedience under the new system of government, was their inability to resist it.

They reflected, at the same time, that unless the intent of that act was obstructed by an early opposition, it would operate in a very fatal manner to their interests. Its professed and avowed purpose was to arm Canada against the Colonies. With such a manifest intimation of the danger with which they were threatened, they would stand inexcusable to their constituents, if they neglected any practicable means of warding off so terrible a blow.

The only means by which to prevent it, was obviously by striking the first blow themselves, and making a vigorous attack upon that very quarter, while yet destitute of a power sufficient to resist a sudden and spirited impression.

The success they had met with at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, had already paved the way to an enterprize of this nature. They had, by taking them, broken down the fences, that guarded the frontiers of Canada, and were now at liberty to enter, and contend on equal ground with the small number of troops remaining for its defence.

They were duly sensible, on the other hand, that by taking so bold a step, they changed at once the whole nature of the war. From defensive on their part,



part, it then became offensive, and subjected them henceforwards to the imputation of being the aggressors in this unfortunate quarrel: many who before such an attempt had warmly espoused their cause in Britain, would probably be offended at this measure, and tax them with heightening the fury, and increasing the mischiefs occasioned by this dispute.

They were fully aware, that the principles of resistance, so far as they had hitherto adopted them, far from being condemned by the British nation, were, on the contrary, abetted, and strongly justified by a very considerable party, equal at least, if not superior in number, to that which approved of the measures carried on against them. It might not, therefore, be prudent to expose themselves to the loss of this good-will and favourable inclination to them among their English brethren, which might, on a future opportunity, prove highly serviceable in their cause.

These reflections, which were justly founded, occasioned them to weigh with great deliberation the probable consequences that might result from embracing or declining so daring a measure. The displeasure it might create in England was undoubtedly a disagreeable circumstance; the Americans ought seriously to endeavour to preserve the good opinion and friendship of the English nation: it was a desirable object at all times, but more particularly in the present juncture. But still the preservation of themselves was an object of far greater importance. The assistance they had looked for in England had failed them. Much eloquence had been displayed in Parliament in the support of their cause; petitions and remonstrances had been presented in their behalf, and they had every reason to think that their conduct and principles were approved by a large proportion, perhaps the majority of



the people in Britain. But it was plain that these indications of amity to them were all they were to expect. A variety of causes would prevent any such assistance to them from Britain as they now stood in most need of. It would therefore be unwise to abstain from pursuing any measure, however uncommon and unprecedented, merely from the apprehension of giving umbrage to the English. If they sincerely wished the Americans to prosper in their proceedings, they would rejoice at any successes they might obtain: if, on the contrary, from a lukewarmness, or ignorance of the necessity of taking the most resolute measures, the people of England should condemn them for such an enterprize, it were better to incur their disapprobation, than to hazard the safety of America by an untimely complaisance, for which their real friends in Britain would be no less ready to blame them, than all the judicious part of the world.

As to those arguments that were drawn from the danger of exasperating the enemy to a degree that might increase the resentment he already felt, and provoke him to additional exertions, they were weak and futile: his wrath was already kindled to the highest pitch; he had done, and intended to do all the mischief that lay in his power. Intelligence was daily arriving of the vast preparations he was making to subdue the Colonies. His intentions were hostile in the highest degree. To conquer, or to ravage America, was his fixed determination.—Did it become men of sense and courage to hesitate in such a case about the propriety of any measure that could distress an enemy so outrageously bent on their destruction? The readiest method to obviate his threats, was to show him that they had not intimidated the Americans, and that instead of waiting for the issue of his menacing declarations, they would anticipate every step he proposed to take, and



carry the operations of war into his own precincts, before he was in readiness to wage it upon their own territories.

In a quarrel such as the present, where the ruling power was engaged on the one hand, and subjects on the other, it was the worst of all policy to temporize. Moderation would only produce pride, and averseness to terminate the dispute, from a notion that their spirit began to fail, and that they were fearful of giving too much offence, lest it should create irreconcilableness in the breast of an irritated conqueror.

Were sentiments of this kind to be once admitted, they would destroy all spirit and energy in their councils. America had better end the contest at once, by submission to the dictates of Britain, than persevere in it any longer, unless weak and wavering measures were totally discarded. It was in vain to expect favourable conditions by forbearing to exert themselves. This would only be giving advantages to the enemy, and protracting the war to their own detriment.

The laws of war and of nations allowed the forestalling of an enemy. In their particular case, it would in all probability prevent infinite mischief.— If they forbore to attack the enemy in the quarter proposed, it would be precisely from thence he would make the most dangerous irruption. It was there he would collect his principal force, and come upon them without delay, as soon as it was ready. Happily for America, he was not yet in a formidable posture, nor could be duly prepared till next spring. Now therefore was the season for action.— They had sufficient numbers to spare for such an expedition: it would be undertaken with more alacrity than any other, as the purpose of it was to secure their back-settlements from the incursions of the Indians, whose barbarities they were experi-  
mentally



mentally acquainted with, and multitudes of whom would not fail to join a foe that would entice them by the double motive of pay and plunder.

This business could not be deferred. As soon as winter was over, fleets and armies would sail from Britain to invade their coasts, and their whole strength would then be wanted to protect them.—Then would they feel the consequences of having neglected to annoy the enemy in the effectual manner now proposed; they would be assailed on every side, on that particularly to which their attention was now directed.

These were no surmises: it was publicly known that large reinforcements were expected at Quebec the ensuing campaign, which would, in conjunction, with the Canadians and Indians, form a considerable army. With this, the design of the enemy was to penetrate into the heart of the Colonies, while a superior force was landed on their shores.

The only possible expedient left them to lessen these difficulties, was by immediately resolving to march with all expedition to Quebec, and use their most vigorous efforts to make themselves masters of that place. The possession of it would defeat the most dangerous project they had to apprehend, and open, in all likelihood, a variety of resources, by enabling the inhabitants to declare and act according to their inclinations, which were well known to be favourable to the Colonies.

All these considerations duly weighed, it were inconsistent with sound policy, to delay an attempt from which they had every reason to hope for success. If they did not risk a previous attack on their part, it was inevitable on that of the enemy, and no doubt could be entertained that he would take every precaution to render it successful which pecuniary advantages could procure.



No time was to be lost; for though the military force there was not numerous, yet it was commanded by an intrepid and vigilant officer, whose military skill, and enterprizing disposition, made him formidable in any situation he might be. Confiding in these qualities, the British administration had intrusted him with powers that rendered him absolute master in the Province of which he was appointed Governor. He was commissioned to embody the people of Canada, and to march at their head against the Colonies. Though the Canadians were tardy in their obedience, yet he would, on the arrival of reinforcements, be soon able to compel them to it. He had already collected a numerous body of Indians, and was promised more. The troops he had, though few, were well disciplined; and if further leisure and opportunity were allowed him, every thing was to be dreaded from a person of his spirit and abilities.

It was with great reason that Congress entertained this opinion of General Carlton. Notwithstanding the disadvantages he laboured under in his new government, such was his diligence and care, that with a handful of regulars, and a small number of such as he could rely upon, he found means to repress the ill affected, and to contain them in subjection, though infinitely superior in strength, and continually encouraged by the secret machinations of the Colonists to throw off the English yoke.

In consequence of the determination of Congress, a body of three thousand men were put under the command of Generals Montgomery and Schuyler, with orders to proceed to Lake Champlain, where flat-bottom boats were preparing to convey them to the entrance of the Sorel, a river that flows in a direct line to the fort which bears its name, and there discharges itself into the great river of St. Lawrence.

When



When General Montgomery, who headed the first division, was arrived at Crown Point, he was informed that several armed vessels, some of which were of considerable force, were stationed at St. John's, a fort of great strength on the Sorel, from whence they were about to sail, in order to obstruct his passage across the lake.

Upon this intelligence, he hastened with all speed, and took possession of an island that commanded the mouth of the Sorel, and from whence he could prevent their entrance into the lake.

On the arrival of General Schuyler, who was the superior in command, they jointly agreed in publishing a manifesto, inviting the people of Canada to join them. To support the design of this declaration, they advanced towards St. John's, situated about twelve miles from the lake; but they could not make good their landing under the cannon of that fort, and being apprehensive, from the appearance of strength, and the countenance of the garrison, that they should meet with great difficulties in such an attempt, they landed at a distance, in a part of the country full of woods, swamps, and rivulets. But here they were immediately attacked by a large body of Indians, and found it necessary, from the inconveniency of their situation, to retreat with all speed to the island which they had first occupied.

Illness having obliged General Schuyler to remove to Albany, the sole command devolved upon Montgomery, a man every way fit for the business he was now intrusted with. He united in an eminent degree, the character of a soldier and a gentleman; polite, well-spoken, and humane; brave, cool, and thoroughly versed in his profession.

He soon found means, by his address, to detach from General Carlton numbers of those Indians who had joined him; and upon the arrival of the remain-



ing troops destined for this expedition, he determined to lay siege to St. John's.

In the mean time various parties of the Americans were dispersed over the frontiers of Canada, where the inhabitants received them with great friendship and hospitality. They not only furnished them with provisions, but assisted in carrying on the siege, and reinforced them with numbers of their own people.

While General Montgomery was employed in this siege, Colonel Allen, a bold and enterprising man, to whom chiefly the Colonies were indebted for the taking of Crown Point and Ticonderoga, now formed the project of surprising Montreal. He marched to this place at the head of a small party of resolute adventurers, like himself; but the officers who were stationed there, having received intelligence of his approach, went out and attacked him with the militia and a detachment of regulars. His party was totally routed, and himself taken prisoner, with a number of his men. Their treatment was rather severe; they were loaded with irons, Allen himself not excepted, and sent prisoners to England on board a man of war.

The siege of St. John's went on slowly at first for want of ammunition; but General Montgomery having acquired a large supply of powder, by the taking of Chamblee, a small fort at a little distance from St. John's, he now was enabled to push his operations with vigour.

The garrison behaved with great courage, and supported with uncommon patience the distresses to which they were reduced by the want of sufficient provisions. They were commanded by Major Preston, who acquitted himself on this occasion with equal skill and valour.

General Carlton, conscious of the importance of this place, made every possible exertion to relieve it.



it. His situation was in every respect highly unfavourable: the regular troops in his province were now an inconsiderable number; the necessity of providing for the defence of St. John's, had obliged him to garrison it with the major part of them: the few he had left were dispersed at a considerable distance from each other; and it was chiefly upon new levies he was now to depend.

In this exigency, it was proposed by Colonel Maclean, an active and gallant officer, to raise a regiment out of the Scotch Highlanders that had lately emigrated from their country: with this body of men, assisted by some Canadians, the Colonel posted himself at the junction of the Sorel with the river St. Lawrence.

In the mean time General Carlton repaired to Montreal; where, with infinite pains, he collected about a thousand men, chiefly natives of Canada. With these, and a few regulars and British volunteers, he set out to join Colonel Maclean, intending to march with him directly to the relief of St. John's.

But the Provincials, who perceived his design, gathered a superior force, and attacked him on his endeavouring to pass from the island where Montreal stands, to the eastern shore: his Canadians were soon routed by the Provincials, and the whole scheme was defeated.

Another body of Canadians who had joined Colonel Maclean, hearing of the disaster that had befallen their countrymen, abandoned him instantly, and he was compelled to hasten back to Quebec with all possible speed.

These two successive defeats were powerful encouragements to the Americans, who were besieging St. John's: they carried on their works with double ardour, and made such a progress, as to prepare for an assault on the body of the place. The



garrison as resolutely waited for it, intending to defend themselves to the last extremity.

But the news of the two last unsuccessful engagements being communicated to them, and the utter impossibility of being succoured represented by General Montgomery, they yielded to necessity; and as any further defence could only occasion needless bloodshed, they consented to treat for the surrender of the fort.

The terms demanded by the garrison, were, to be permitted to withdraw to Great Britain; they had even insisted, at first, on some days respite, in expectation of General Carlton being able either to raise the siege, or throw in refreshments and succours; but both these requests were peremptorily denied. The only terms allowed them, were to march out with the honours of war, in consideration of their gallant behaviour; but then to lay down their arms, and deliver themselves up as prisoners. They were permitted to keep their private property; and in all other respects were treated with that humanity which characterised General Montgomery.

The reddition of fort St. John took place on the third of November, seventy-five. The number of prisoners amounted to upwards of five hundred regulars, and near two hundred Canadians: among these were some of the principal noblesse of that Province, who had very zealously embraced this occasion of testifying their attachment and fidelity to the British government.

The loss of this place was a heavy and unexpected blow to the British interest in America. The flower of the military and of the Canadians were here. It was universally expected that General Carlton would have been able to relieve it. His ill success, though proceeding from causes that made it inevitable, and which neither skill nor va-



lour could oppose, raised the reputation of his antagonists to a high pitch, and added fresh courage to the Americans and their adherents.

The body of Provincials who had compelled Colonel Maclean to abandon the post of Sorel, lost no time in erecting batteries on the point projecting furthest into the river St. Lawrence, with the view of preventing the shipping at Montreal from going to Quebec : rafts and other constructions of that sort, well provided with cannon, were stationed in the river, and every preparation made that could effectually obstruct the General's passage.

Here, again, the Americans met with the completest success. After several fruitless attempts made by the armed vessels from Montreal, to force their way down the river, they were attacked in their turn, forced to retire, and pursued by the Provincials, who were now become masters of both sides of the shore, and threatened to reduce Montreal as they had already done St. John's.

After taking this fortress, General Montgomery advanced immediately with his victorious forces towards Montreal. His approach being daily expected, the few British forces in that town repaired for safety on board the shipping, in hopes of some auspicious opportunity of escaping down the river ; but it was so well and so closely guarded by the Provincial floating batteries, that all escape was soon discovered to be impracticable. Thus, whether in the town or in the shipping, they now saw that they must unavoidably fall into the hands of the Provincials.

In this extremity, the principal of the British and French inhabitants applied to General Montgomery, for the grant of a capitulation ; but he gave them to understand, that being defenceless and entirely at his discretion, they could not expect such a concession on his part ; as he came not, however,  
with



with any intention to oppress or molest them, but, on the contrary, to give them protection and freedom, he would promise, in a solemn manner, that they should remain in the unviolated possession of all their property and rights, civil and religious. He expressed his hope, that the Canadians would speedily have an opportunity of settling their government and laws conformably to their own desire, in a Provincial Congress of their own chusing. This would establish their freedom and domestic affairs upon a permanent footing, and deliver them from the inconveniencies of which they justly complained under the form of government lately introduced among them for iniquitous purposes.

He engaged, that in the mean time, the execution of the laws should be conducted as near as possible in the spirit of the English constitution, and that the people should be treated with the utmost lenity both in private and public concerns.

Having thus adjusted all matters to the entire satisfaction of the inhabitants, he took peaceable possession of Montreal on the thirteenth day of November, seventy-five.

After the loss of St. John's, and the surrender of Montreal, people began to think that Quebec would shortly share the same fate. Destitute of a sufficient garrison for its defence, and full of malcontents, it seemed to offer itself an easy conquest to the Provincial army, elate with such rapid successes, and led on by so able a commander. It was not doubted this would be his next attempt, and the general expectation was, that he would succeed.

What contributed particularly to this apprehension, was the absence of the Governor, who was himself in the most imminent danger of being made prisoner; in which case all hopes of preserving either the capital or the province itself, would be finally given up.



General Montgomery, who fully knew the importance of making such a prize, neglected nothing to secure it: he was diligently constructing flat boats, to carry guns of a sufficient weight of metal to attack the British armament on his side, and thus to put it between two fires.

No expectation now remained of effecting its escape: all that could possibly be attempted, was to watch the opportunity of a dark night, to carry the Governor safely off. This was happily executed accordingly, in a small boat, rowed in the profoundest silence with muffled paddles instead of oars, of which the motion would, by its noise, have inevitably occasioned an alarm among the enemies craft, so thickly stationed along the river.

Having thus provided for his safety, the next step was to capitulate with the Provincials; but the conditions were entirely their own. The whole armament was obliged to surrender: it consisted of eleven armed vessels, with a number of prisoners, some of them British officers of rank; General Prescott was one; together with a very considerable quantity of military stores.

In this manner was the whole dominion of Britain in Canada reduced to the city of Quebec. The certainty of its being lost with the rest, appeared the more certain and indubitable, as it was now threatened by an enemy no less intrepid and enterprising than Montgomery himself.

This new enemy was Colonel Arnold, a man of the most undaunted courage and singular activity. While the Provincial army was encamped before Boston, he conceived the bold design of invading Canada, in a manner never yet attempted, in the many expeditions that had taken place during the various wars that had been waged in America between the French and the British Colonies.

Hitherto



Hitherto the only practicable road to that Province was by the Lakes: they afforded the only convenient communication even in peace. Little was it expected that a military force, attended by all the incumbrances of war, would ever imagine it were possible to penetrate into that country by any other way.

About the middle of September, a body of chosen men, consisting of near twelve hundred, left the camp at Boston under the command of Colonel Arnold. They proceeded to Newbury, a sea port, situated at the mouth of the Merrimack, from whence they embarked for the mouth of the Kennebeck.

This was the river intended to form the line of their expedition. Its head was at no great distance from Quebec, the ultimate object of their undertaking; but its stream was rapid, and difficult to be stemmed; and its bed was strowed with a multitude of rocks that made it excessively dangerous.

They begun this laborious and fatiguing navigation on the twenty-second day of September.—They were obliged constantly to work upwards against an impetuous current, that frequently overset their boats, or filled them with water. They were often compelled by cataracts and other impediments, to land and continue their march on shore, loaded with their boats, and other warlike burdens, no less cumbersome. In the encountering of these, and many other difficulties, they suffered great losses of stores, and provisions; to say nothing of the excessive fatigue they underwent continually, the carrying places proving not seldom very long, and full of obstructions, one of them stretching no less than a dozen miles.

In the midst of these incessant difficulties, Colonel Arnold exerted all his vigilance to prevent a surprize. The Indians, indeed, were the only people



ple from whom such a thing could be apprehended in the frightful wilderness in which he was now engaged. In order, however, to obviate any danger of that kind, besides the strictest guard and look out on every side, he used the precaution of reassembling every night, in one encampment, the various divisions that had marched apart during the day.

After reaching the head of the river Kennebeck, they had still to make their way through forests and swamps, and over mountains and the rocky summits of those high ridges of land that separate New England from Canada.

The prodigious hardships they had undergone before their arrival at this place, had occasioned numbers of their men to be sickly. In their progress along the shores of that river, they had sometimes been forced to clear a passage, by cutting down the underwood, for miles. These continual obstructions retarded them so much, that on some days they could hardly get four or five miles forwards. Their provisions too, from the frequent losing of them by accidents on the water, and from the tedious and unexpected length of this painful journey, were become so scarce, that many of them were obliged at last to kill their dogs for food, and to have recourse to other shifts of that sort for their sustenance.

On quitting Kennebeck, Colonel Arnold, in order to rid himself of all incumbrances, dismissed the sick and disabled, and with his own division proceeded forwards with all possible speed; but unfortunately for the expedition, here one whole third of his people, with a Colonel at their head, composing the rear division, took advantage of his absence; and pretending a want of sufficient provisions, deserted him, and returned home the way they came.

Undismayed



Undismayed by this desertion, the body under Colonel Arnold pushed onwards, and after having, with the same courage and fortitude as before, overcome a variety of obstacles, they arrived at length on the banks of the Chaudiere, which discharges itself into the river St. Lawrence, not far from the city of Quebec.

On the third day of November, full six weeks from the beginning of the dreadful march of which they now saw happily an end, they entered the cultivated parts of Canada, and met with the habitations of men, after having lost sight of them for above a month.

They met with the same welcome that had been shown to their countrymen in other parts; they were supplied with all kinds of necessaries, and experienced every sort of encouragement they could desire.

The Canadians were struck with amazement, when they beheld an embodied force emerging, as it were, from the bosom of the wilderness. They were not unaccustomed themselves occasionally to visit those deserts, in hunting parties; but it had never entered into their conceptions, that it was possible for human beings to traverse such an immense wild, where obstructions arose at every step, that had hitherto proved insurmountable; and where Nature itself seemed to have forbidden such an attempt, by throwing the most dreadful and terrifying discouragements in their way.

The novelty of the enterprize, the spirit that gave it birth, the intrepidity and genius that conducted it, the courage and constancy with which it was achieved, all contributed to render it the most striking and memorable event that happened during the war.

It did the highest honour to its conductor, and to those he commanded: they were chiefly New  
England



England men ; the major part of whom had never been in war. It showed they possessed the innate bravery of their forefathers, and were truly deserving the name of Englishmen.

But it was not only in America this expedition was extolled, as a feat of the most consummate skill and bravery : it was spoken of in England itself, and over all Europe in terms of the highest admiration, and allowed by military judges to be an exploit of the first rate merit.

While it was viewed in this light by the European world, we are not to be surprized that throughout the American continent, the people whom it so deeply interested, should represent it as one of the most stupendous transactions that ever happened in war, and compare it to the march of Hannibal over the Alps.

While the inhabitants of Canada were in this state of astonishment at the boldness and success of the New England people, Colonel Arnold published a declaration in the name of General Washington, which had been previously concerted between them on his departure for this expedition.

It invited them to accede to the general union of the Colonies, and to fight like them for American freedom against European oppression. They were told that the intention of Congress in sending troops amongst them, was by no means to exercise hostilities, but to give them countenance and protection, and afford them an opportunity of asserting their own just rights. Far from considering the Canadians as enemies, they were strictly ordered to treat them as friends and allies, with whom they were jointly to co-operate in expelling the common enemy.

In consequence of these solemn assurances, they were desired to remain in their dwellings with the  
utmost



utmost confidence and security, and to furnish the troops with all the necessaries in their power, for which they might depend upon full payment.

The intelligence of Colonel Arnold's arrival in Canada, together with the surprising manner of his having penetrated through such a multitude of obstacles, threw the city of Quebec into the utmost consternation. It was at this juncture in a very weak situation. The inhabitants, and especially the natives of Britain, and of the Colonies settled there, were highly averse to the Quebec act, and with the general system respecting the Colonies. Their discontents had exposed them to the resentment of the ruling powers; they were mistrusted, and regarded as secret enemies, who would not fail to seize the first opportunity of acting openly an hostile part.

In the mean time, their behaviour was such as manifested how much they conceived themselves ill used by the preference given, as they said, and partiality shown to those Canadians and British individuals who differed from them in sentiments, and affected, on that account, a superior degree of loyalty.

Born and bred in principles of freedom, they complained that they could not express themselves on these subjects firmly and explicitly, without incurring the censure of the adverse party, and being reproached with malevolence to their king and country.

They imputed to these injurious suspicions the refusal to embody them for the defence of the city, when they had requested it, and at a time, when from the departure of all the military, it was left in a state absolutely defenceless, notwithstanding the immense property it contained, which must unavoidably have fallen into the hands of the Provincials,



cials, together with the city, had it then been attacked, as it was daily apprehended.

But the English settled at Quebec were not the only malcontents there; the far greater number of the French inhabitants were in the same disposition. As the Quebec act affected the inferior classes among them chiefly, though they did not dare to vent their dissatisfaction at it with the same freedom as the natives of Britain, yet they were no less ready to oppose it in every shape they could, without coming to open resistance.

Neither was it doubted, that they would at last have recourse to this, if ever circumstances should prove unfavourable to the interest of Britain in that Colony. The behaviour of their countrymen in many parts of the Province, those especially remote from the seat of government, and where the multitude was under no controul, had exhibited convincing proofs what little dependence could be placed on their attachment, and was a sufficient earnest of what might be expected from the French inhabitants of Quebec.

The heart-burnings and animosities necessarily arising from these causes, were at their height when Colonel Arnold made his appearance on the opposite shore, in sight of the town. Luckily for the place, intimation of his approach had been given time enough to remove all the boats and small-craft, otherwise he would probably have made himself master of it in the first moments of the general panic he had occasioned.

This disappointment retarded his passage some days: he was obliged to apply to the Canadians for assistance; they gave it with the utmost cheerfulness. But another difficulty remained: the river was guarded by frigates and armed vessels, that were now posted in such a manner, as to render his passage impracticable by day. He was compelled



to wait for an obscure night, favoured by which, he found means, by great management and circumspection, to elude the vigilance of the men of war people, and to land his men on the other side of the river.

In the mean time, necessity had effected a reunion of all parties in Quebec. The property contained in that city was so great, and the apprehension of loosing it, should the city be taken, so well founded, that both English and Canadians agreed to join sincerely and cordially in its defence. They were, according to their desire, formed into an armed body, and did military duty with all possible alacrity.

In this exigency, application was made to the men of war in the river for the assistance of their sailors and marines. They were landed accordingly, and were stationed at the cannon on the ramparts, where they behaved with their usual intrepidity, and did essential service.

In such a march as that executed by Colonel Arnold, it had been utterly impossible to bring any artillery. He now greatly experienced the want of it. He had found none in his crossing through Canada. It is probable that he relied upon some fortunate contingency for a supply so necessary for his present undertaking; or that he promised himself to be able to carry the place by surprize; or, possibly, that the numbers of the well-wishers to his cause, would have overpowered the other party, and delivered the town into his hands.

On the failing of these expectations, he had no other plan to follow than to seize the avenues to the city, and cut off its communication with the country, in order to distress it for want of provisions, and thereby accelerate its reduction on the arrival of those troops that were now daily expected to besiege it in due form.

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He posted himself on the heights of Abram, famous for the victory and fall of General Wolfe, in the late war. From thence he sent a flag, summoning the town to surrender; but the garrison fired at, and refused to admit his message. Finding this trial ineffectual, he withdrew to some distance from it, in order to refresh his men; not forgetting, however, to place them in such a position as to intercept all supplies from without. Here he determined to remain till joined by those forces that had taken St. John's and Montreal, and which he doubted not would use their utmost endeavours to close the successful campaign they had made by the taking of Quebec.

This was their earnest desire, as well as that of General Montgomery, who commanded them. The surrender of Montreal had supplied them with the cloathing necessary for so rigorous a climate as that of Canada during the winter season. It was now begun, and had been severely felt by them; but such was their confidence in the abilities of their General, and their readiness to second his designs, that they bore all hardships with the greatest patience and alacrity.

Such behaviour in them was the more singular and unexpected, as the natives of the British Colonies have a remarkable antipathy to regular and formal subordination: the people of New England especially, are much more intolerant of controul than the others, and are peculiarly averse to any exterior display of authority. In these respects, the Colonists partake of the natural disposition of their neighbours, the Indians, who are notoriously more jealous of their personal independence than any other race of men.

A disposition of this nature was not to be combated with the severity of military discipline, which would have quickly occasioned discontent and deser-



tion, and thus put an end to the operations intended. On this occasion the General had constant employment for the various abilities he possessed. His discretion, his firmness, his talent of persuading, were all needed to keep together men, who had no other motive to induce their obedience, than zeal for the common cause, and respect for his character.

In the mean time General Carlton was returned to Quebec. His presence was itself a garrison. His exertions were such as bespoke the most determined resistance, and contributed by their prudence to revive the courage of all men. That no danger might be harboured within the walls, all that were unwilling to bear arms in defence of the town, were ordered to quit it. The force he had was carefully exercised, and though small, and consisting mostly of people unused to arms, it became shortly expert and useful beyond their own expectations.

Had an army of sufficient strength invested the place, the garrison it contained would not certainly have proved sufficient to defend a town of such a size, and encompassed with such extensive fortifications. Their whole amount did not exceed sixteen hundred; among whom there was only one company of regulars, and a few marines. The chief dependence was upon the seamen, who were about five hundred.

Happily for the garrison, the besiegers were not so superior to them in point of numbers, as to cause much apprehension on that account. It was justly foreseen, that with proper management, a sufficiency of strength would be found to cope with every attack they might make; and that if they should become masters of Quebec, it would be much more owing to their activity and vigour, than to the multitude of hands they could employ.

Having thus taken effectual measures for a resolute



lute defence, unanimity and confidence were happily restored among the inhabitants, and they chearfully prepared to give the enemy a spirited reception, whenever he came.

Two impediments of an essential kind militated in their favour against this enemy; the lateness of the season, and the defect of artillery. The snows were set in, and the roads were deep and miry, and impracticable for the conveying of heavy cannon.

But with all these disadvantages, General Montgomery determined to pursue the enterprize he had projected. He was aware, that if he waited for the return of fair weather, he would have a still more difficult task; the garrison would be reinforced, and he would have a superior strength to encounter, which would at once put an end to all attempts upon Quebec.

It was the fifth of December before he arrived in sight of that town, after enduring a variety of hardships in marching from Montreal. The distance was one hundred and fifty miles, a space, which at a milder time of the year, would have been traversed with ease; but it was now a scene of continual interruption. Winter and climate conspired against him; it was a severe trial for the northern Colonists who were with him, but those who came from the south were ready to sink under it.

In the midst of all these discouragements, the siege of Quebec was opened. From the fewness of his forces, General Montgomery flattered himself that the garrison might be induced to sally forth upon him occasionally. This would have given him an opportunity, in case of their being repulsed, to pursue them so closely, as to force a passage into the town during the confusion of a retreat. But they suffered him to make his approaches without any other interruption than the fire of their guns,



which were well served, and did considerable execution.

The Provincial forces had been much diminished by the necessity of leaving detachments at Montreal and St. John's; and sending parties out to collect provisions. This proved a great hindrance to the pushing the siege with vigour and dispatch.

As it was necessary, however, to preserve a good countenance, General Montgomery summoned the town in due form. He insisted upon the strength and goodness of his troops, the spirit with which their successes had inspired them, and the danger of exposing such raw men as the garrison was composed of, to the fury and consequences of an assault. He represented, at the same time, the impossibility of relief at the present, and that none could be expected before next April, before the expiration of which, Quebec must infallibly surrender, were it only for want of necessary supplies,

These summons were sent as usual by a flag; but they were treated as Arnold's had been, and all correspondence was refused. Means were found, however, to convey the above intimation to the Governor; but he was not a man to be intimidated by any motives or representations whatsoever.

The whole artillery of the besiegers consisted only of five small mortars, and six cannons of light metal: with these General Montgomery was now obliged to make his best endeavours to annoy the city. The bombardment continued some time without intermission, but did not occasion much damage or disorder; and the cannonade produced little effect, from the insufficient size of the pieces.

In the mean time, the news of his past successes had filled the Colonies with the most sanguine expectations of their continuance, and that the taking of Quebec would crown the achievements of their first campaign. The General knew the consequences



ces of popular disappointment, and was therefore determined to leave no expedient untried to satisfy the wishes of a people who honoured him with so high a degree of confidence.

But the difficulties he had to contend with were now daily increasing. He had to encounter the extremities of fatigue and of cold. His men were not sufficiently numerous to relieve each other properly in the perpetual labours they underwent, and when worn down with toil, they were still exposed to the inclemency of the weather. He began to apprehend, that disgusted at so much suffering, those whose time of service was expired, would demand and insist upon their being discharged.

On the other hand, he saw no prospect of making that impression on the place which might have staggered the resolution of the besieged. They were well supplied with artillery, and warlike stores of all kinds, and were inuring themselves to firmness and perseverance, through the example of the Governor and his officers, who by their skill and assiduity, had rendered the new levies highly serviceable, and had at the same time infused a prodigious spirit into all under their command. This was visible upon every emergency. The garrison, though composed of individuals who greatly differed in character and situations of life, united in the bearing with the utmost cheerfulness the severe and continual duty that was unavoidably imposed upon them.

The depth of winter was now at hand. The General was convinced of the absolute necessity of raising the siege, or of finishing it by a speedy success. This latter was however a forlorn hope: he saw no other method of effecting it than by storming the place; but this was an attempt accompanied with infinite danger, and where it was hardly possible to succeed.



The upper part of the city of Quebec was surrounded with works too strong for an attack with his small force; and the access from the lower town, on a supposition he could carry it, was excessively difficult; from its steepness, being in some places a precipice, and defensible by a handful of men against multitudes.

But his native intrepidity, and that thirst for glory which is the predominant passion of heroic minds, made him overlook all these perils, and resolve at once to compass the point proposed, or perish in the attempt.

Trusting to the good fortune that had hitherto attended him, and confiding in the bravery of his troops, and their alacrity to follow wherever he should lead; he finally determined to make a bold, and, as much as possible, a sudden and unexpected effort to take the town by escalade.

But the vigilance of the Governor was such, that every part of the place was guarded with all possible circumspection, and the strength he had was so judiciously distributed, as to be able to carry the speediest assistance wherever it might be wanted.

Independently of this it has been furnished, that intelligence was conveyed to the garrison of the design in agitation in the Provincial camp. This put the besieged so much upon their guard, that by the arrangements they immediately made, it was seen that the plan projected against them was discovered. This, it has been said, compelled the besiegers to adopt another, which being of a more difficult operation, defeated the whole scheme.

The last day of December, seventy-five, was pitched upon by General Montgomery for this arduous trial. Having made all the requisite preparations, he advanced to the attack by break of day, in the midst of a heavy storm of snow, which in  
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some measure covered his men from the sight of the garrison.

Four attacks were made on this occasion :—two of them were feints upon the Upper Town ; the two real assaults were commanded by General Montgomery on one side, and Colonel Arnold on the other. These different approaches of the enemy, threw the garrison into great uncertainty, whither to turn their principal attention for defence.

In order to inspire his people with emulation, General Montgomery assigned one of the attacks to the New-York, and the other to the New England men : these were headed by Arnold, the others he led on in person.

Through some mistake, the signal for attacking was given before it had been intended. The besieged, through this accident, were alarmed time enough to prevent a surprize, upon which the Provincials chiefly depended.

The way through which General Montgomery had to pass, was between the river St. Lawrence, on one side, and the rocks on which the Upper Town stands, on the other.—It was narrow and incommodious. As he knew the most desperate exertions of valour would be required, he had selected a number of his most resolute men to accompany him on this first onset. With these he made the quickest haste to close in upon the enemy, as near as it was practicable.

He soon forced his way through the first barrier ; but the second, which led immediately to the gates of the Lower Town, was much more strongly fortified. Here a strong body of the besieged was posted, with several pieces of cannon. They received him with a discharge of musketry and grape shot, that made an instant and almost total slaughter of his party,—He fell himself with his principal officers,



The loss of their General so much disconcerted the body which he had commanded, that the attack was not continued, and a retreat was thought most advisable.

Colonel Arnold, at the head of his New England men, was in the mean time engaged in a furious assault on the side of the Lower Town opposite to that where Montgomery had just fallen. He attacked a barrier defended with cannon, and carried it, after an hours obstinate resistance; but this success was attended with a great loss of his men; and he received a wound himself, which compelled him to withdraw from action.

Those officers, however, on whom the command now devolved, continued the assault with unabated vigour, and took possession of another barrier.

But the besieged, who now perceived the small number of the enemy employed in this quarter, and that nothing was to be apprehended from any other, collected the whole strength of the garrison against them. A large body, on the one hand, sallied out from a gate that opened towards their rear, and fell upon them with the utmost fury; their whole corps lay mean while entirely exposed to a heavy fire from the town walls, under which they were now so closely pressed, that all retreat was cut off. In this dreadful situation they maintained a fight of full three hours, before they consented to surrender.

Such was the issue of an expedition, which, had it terminated to the advantage of those who conducted it, might possibly have decided at once the fate of America.

The siege of Quebec forms a remarkable epocha in this unfortuate war. The behaviour of the Provincial troops was such, as silenced all those who had suspected their military character. The bravest and most experienced veterans could not have exceeded



ceeded the firmness and intrepidity they displayed in their last attack.

The termination of the siege by this signal overthrow, put also an end to all apprehensions for the safety of Quebec and of Canada. The strength of the Provincials was now so much lessened, that Colonel Arnold had not eight hundred effective men left under his command.

With this inconsiderable body he had, however, the boldness to encamp within three miles of the town. As it was out of his power to attack a place of which the garrison doubled his own numbers, he contented himself with intercepting the conveyance of refreshments and provisions thither, and succeeded therein so well, as to prove a heavy annoyance.

In order, at the same time, to maintain his ground in case of offensive measures on the part of the garrison, he fortified his encampment with all care, and took every precaution that circumstances would allow to secure himself in the position he had chosen.

Notwithstanding the loss of Montgomery had, in manner, defeated the end of the expedition, the Provincials were still determined to remain in possession of what he had acquired for them, till circumstances more auspicious afforded them a second opportunity of renewing the attempt in which he had unfortunately perished.

Colonel Arnold's situation was, however, extremely critical. He was at an immense distance from those parts whence effectual assistance could be expected. The most expert officers, and the bravest soldiers of the Provincial army had fallen before Quebec; and his chief resources lay now in his own genius and abilities.

He had, on his first entrance into Canada, experienced much kind treatment from the French inhabitants, and been frequently promised to be joined



by a considerable number of them ; but these promises, from a variety of causes, had not been performed. Had they been possessed of the same constancy of determination, that animated the English Colonists, and united under the standards of Montgomery and Arnold, while they were yet victorious, it is highly probable, that notwithstanding the courage and capacity of its Governor, the capital must have followed the example of the Province, and at length have submitted to their arms.

But now that a total reverse of fortune had befallen them, the utmost that could be expected from the Canadians, was, that they would continue friendly to the Provincials, and supply their wants while they continued among them.

It was even become a difficult task to keep the Provincial troops themselves from disembodiment, and returning to their respective homes. This reluctance to remain in their present station, did not proceed from a defect of spirit, or good will in the cause, nor from want of attachment to their commander, for whom they professed the highest regard ; but from a persuasion that it was needless, and that all reasonable hopes of making an impression upon the enemy in that quarter were entirely frustrated by the preceding disasters.

The utmost he could do, was to prevail upon them to remain upon the ground they occupied, and from thence to keep a strict eye on the enemy, and to endeavour, in the mean time, to strengthen and extend their interest among the people in Canada, and use every method to persuade them to take at once a decisive and active part in favour of the English Colonies.

While the remains of the late American army were thus enduring, with the utmost patience and fortitude, the hardships of a winter encampment on the frozen plains of Canada, the people at Quebec were



were enjoying the comfortable situation of being completely relieved from the terrors of falling into the hands of an enemy, whose wants would have, in all likelihood, prompted him to seize upon the vast property they possessed.

Their spirits were so elated, and the confidence they reposed in their commander so unbounded, that it was imagined by some, that had they been led forth after the defeat of the Provincials, they would probably have entirely routed them, and compelled them to fly out of the country; but as the advantage already gained had effected all that was necessary at the present, it was judged more prudent to run no farther hazard; and to wait quietly for the reinforcements that would not fail to come from Britain in due time, and place them henceforward out of the reach of all danger.

This deliverance of Quebec may be considered as one of those proofs, how far the valour and military talents of one man, are able to go in the speedy formation of soldiers. The American war itself was indeed a striking instance of this kind. But nothing showed this truth in a clearer light than the behaviour of those men, whom Governor Carlton was compelled to employ upon this memorable occasion. They acted with coolness and resolution suitable to every emergency; and from the time they took up arms, to that when their service was no longer needed, they testified a readiness to obey command, and an acquiescence in difficulties, that could not have been exceeded by men the most familiarized to the hardships and painful subordinations of a military life.

The rancour that had so unhappily subsisted between the regular and the Provincial troops, gave way, on this occasion, to sentiments of humanity. The Americans who surrendered themselves prisoners of war, had no reason to complain of ill usage: the wounded



wounded were treated with proper care, and no unnecessary severity was shown to the others.

No man that ever fell in battle during a civil contest, was ever more universally regretted than General Montgomery. He was of a respectable family in Ireland. After serving in the late war with distinction, he married an American lady, and settled in that part of the world, where he was beloved and respected as much as if he had been a native of the first rank and consequence. Though a stranger by birth, the reputation of his integrity was such, that from the character he bore of a warm friend to the liberty of America, he was, on the first breaking out of hostilities, considered as a man fit to be trusted in that cause. He was accordingly called forth by Congress, and honoured with the commission of Brigadier-General.

His conduct fully corresponded with their high opinion of his abilities and fidelity. in the short space of time he lived to act in their service, no man rendered them of more importance, or did their cause more honour by the magnanimity of his proceedings.

As he had sacrificed the happiness he enjoyed in private life, to the service and defence of the community of which he was become a member, he was absolved of all unworthy and factious views, and considered as a man who acted from conscience and principle.

In this light he was viewed while living, and spoken of when dead. He had the singular felicity of being equally esteemed by the friends and the foes of the party he had espoused. When the news of his death arrived in England, it occasioned general sorrow: his name was mentioned in Parliament itself with the highest respect. Those who had been his fellow-soldiers in the late triumphant war, wept over his untimely fate. The minister himself ho-  
noured



noured his memory; he acknowledged his worth, though he reprobated the cause for which he fell.

Such was the end of General Montgomery.—He died in the strength and flower of his days. What has been said of some celebrated characters, may with peculiar justice be applied to him:—He lived long enough for his own reputation, but died too soon for the good of that society to which he belonged.

It may not be amiss to add, that all due respect was shown to his remains, and that they were buried with the military solemnities becoming his station.



## C H A P. XV.

*Transactions in Virginia.*

1775.

**W**HILE the northern Colonies of America were thus involved in hostilities, the southern were torn with dissensions that threatened to terminate in the same manner.

The people of Virginia had ever since the commencement of this unfortunate dispute, distinguished themselves by their forwardness in openly and explicitly condemning the pretensions of Great Britain, and asserting those various privileges to which they thought themselves and the other Colonies entitled.

They still continued in the same mind and temper. They had unanimously agreed in sending Delegates to Congress; they had zealously adopted all its opinions, and conformed to all its injunctions; they had formed committees and associations for every purpose recommended to be prosecuted in that manner: they had, in short, resolutely determined to maintain, at all hazards, the confederacy entered into by the Colonies, for the obtaining redress of grievances, and the resisting of the claims of Britain.

That Province was at this time governed by the Earl of Dunmore, a nobleman of a firm and resolute disposition, whom at first they treated with the highest marks of respect, and with every proof of great personal regard.

He had, however, at this turbulent period been, like all other Governors on the continent, often embroiled with the people of his government. He had

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at this time been engaged in a violent altercation with the Assembly, the dissolution of which afforded great causes of complaint, on account of the expiration of those militia laws, which could not be renewed without their immediate concurrence.

These laws were of peculiar consequence in Virginia, which is inhabited by prodigious multitudes of Negro slaves, dispersed over the whole Province; and amounting to twice the number of the white inhabitants.

The people on this occasion complained of their being exposed to the manifest danger of an insurrection from the Negroes; and in default of an Assembly, elected a Provincial Convention, which passed a resolution that each county should raise a company for its protection.

The Governor was highly offended at their having thus assumed the power of the militia, which at all times, and in every Colony, is the peculiar prerogative of the Representative of the Crown. Not knowing how far their intentions might reach, after taking so unprecedented a step, he resolved, in order to prevent, as much as lay in his power, any further proceedings of that kind, to secure the powder deposited in the public storehouse of the Colony, at Williamsburgh, the capital: it was accordingly removed on board a ship, by a party of marines dispatched ashore for that purpose.

Notwithstanding this was done during the night, and conducted with the utmost circumspection and secrecy, it was known the very next day; and from the uncommon care that had been taken to conceal it, excited the most violent suspicion that some dangerous design was in agitation.

The towns-people assembled in arms, in order to force the Governor to return the powder. Happily the magistrates interfered, and took upon themselves to obtain the satisfaction that was demanded



by the inhabitants. They represented to him the propriety of the city being always supplied with so necessary an article, and the particular necessity of its being ready at hand at the present time, from the apprehensions lately entertained of plots among the black people, who, on hearing of what had happened, would become the more intent to carry them into execution.

The Governor avowed the removal of the gunpowder was by his direction. Having received intelligence of commotions in the neighbourhood, he deemed it prudent to convey it to a place of safety, promising, however, to return it, whenever it should be wanted.

With this answer, the magistrates of the city rested seemingly satisfied; but this tranquility was quickly interrupted by a report, which was spread that very night, that an armed party from the main of war was marching to Williamsburgh. This brought again the inhabitants together under arms, and they directed their principal vigilance towards the magazine, fully resolved to obstruct all further removals of what it contained.

The conduct and violent complaints of the people on this occasion, were highly offensive to the Governor.

The whole of what had been removed did not exceed eight barrels of gunpowder, a quantity not of sufficient consideration to justify such outrageous murmurs. In this state of irritation at such a defiance of authority, some unguarded expressions were dropped in presence of the disaffected, who did not fail to embitter them in the representation that was made of them to the public.

They were menaced, it seems, with a setting up of the royal standard, and a proclamation of liberty to the black slaves; arms were to be put into their hands, to be employed against their masters;

Williams.



Williamsburgh was threatened with destruction; and other resentful insinuations were thrown out. All these produced high discontent and anger, and kindled a general flame throughout the colony.

Assemblies were held in consequence of the foregoing transactions, wherein the Governor's conduct in them was censured with great asperity.

But the temper of the people was such, that their leaders did not think it necessary to stop at bare complaints: some of the most daring took up arms, with a resolution to compel those who had the gunpowder to restore it, and to seize, at the same time, on the public money into their own possession and keeping.

They were on their march to Williamsburg with this intent, when they were met by the magistrates at a few miles distance from the city. Here an agreement was entered into, by which the Receiver General of the Colony, became security for the payment of the gunpowder; and the inhabitants promised, on their part, to take into their custody the magazine and public revenue.

Happily for the peace of the city; no further consequence resulted from this insurrection. But it alarmed the Governor, who, after dismissing his lady and family on board of a man of war, sent for a party of marines, with which he garrisoned his palace; fortifying it as well as circumstances would allow, and furnishing it with artillery.

He also issued a proclamation, in which he declared the promoter of the insurrection guilty of treasonable behaviour, in compelling the Receiver General to become bound for the price of the powder. The people were accused of disaffection, and a propensity to encourage innovations in government.

But this proclamation was of no avail against those at whom it was levelled. Mr. Henry, the



person who headed the mal-contents, was one of the most popular men in the Colony. He had been a deputy to Congress, and knew that he should be thoroughly supported in what he undertook, not only by the Colony, but by the power of that body if it should become requisite.

His conduct was in the mean time fully approved in the various meetings that were holding every where in the Province. It was unanimously determined to assist and indemnify him, in case he should receive any detriment on account of his public conduct.

They retorted with great warmth the charges imputed to them of intending to subvert the government; they denied, with no less heat, that of being disaffected; and insisted on their being entirely free from blame in the measures they had lately taken, and no ways in fault for the troubles and disturbances that had happened.

It unfortunately fell out about this time, that the copies of some letters, written by the Governor to the British ministry, fell into the hands of some of the adverse party. They made them public, and represented them in an odious light, as mistaking facts, and giving injurious descriptions of the Colonists.

The publication of these letters produced exactly the same consequences that had resulted at Boston, from the discovery of the correspondence of Governor Hutchinson. Suspicion and mistrust put an end to all confidence and cordiality; and all that was said or done on either side, underwent a sinister interpretation.

While the Colony was in this state of confusion, the conciliatory motion carried by the minister during the last session of Parliament, arrived in Virginia. The necessity of obtaining, if possible, the Colony's acceptance of the terms therein proposed, induced



induced the Governor to call an Assembly. He exerted all his abilities in order to persuade them to coincide with the offers of Parliament: he used every argument that could be adduced in their favour; he laid before them the sincerity of the efforts made on the part of Britain, to procure a reconciliation answerable at once to her dignity and their interest: both had been consulted in the proposals now held out to America: they had been framed with a view of leaving the final completion of them equally to the wisdom and the good will of the Colonies: no determinate sum was fixed, as it had been judged most worthy of the constitutional generosity of the British government, to gratify them with the entire and undivided privilege of specifying themselves the extent of the contribution. In this light, which was the true one it ought to be viewed in, the conciliatory motion was no more, in fact, than an earnest admonition from Great Britain to the Colonies, of the indispensable necessity she was under of demanding their assistance: whatever, therefore, they should think proper to give, would be given freely and uncompelled. They ought, for these reasons, cheerfully to embrace this opportunity of proving, that they possessed in reality that sincere attachment for the parent state, which they had so repeatedly professed: Britain was manifestly disposed to live with them on a footing of the sincerest amity; the King and Parliament merited, certainly, by taking so effectual a step towards reconciliation, to be met, on their part, with an equal desire to renew the friendliness that had proved so beneficial to America. A concurrence in the measure proposed, would not only put a final period to the unhappy altercation that had so long interrupted their mutual felicity, but open a certain prospect of obviating all dissensions in future: Britain, upon receiving this proof of their dutiful inclinations,



would instantly remove whatever bore the least appearance of an improper burden upon America, and a clear unquestionable line would be drawn by the terms, in which the motion was conceived, between the claims of Great Britain and the rights of the Colonies.

The manner of address, the arguments employed, and the efforts used by Lord Dunmore on this critical occasion, to prevail upon the Assembly to accede to the terms proposed by Parliament, have by many impartial people been allowed and represented as equally well chosen, and justifiable, and perfectly adapted to the end he had in view.

But as in all human affairs there is a season when the powers of reasoning and persuasion are at an end, and the decision of things depends on the temper and passions of the day, the speech of the Governor, which might, at a happier, and more peaceable period, have proved a ground of temperate discussion, was in a manner lost and forgotten, amidst the jars and bickerings that followed immediately on the opening of the Assembly.

The session had begun by an inquiry into the origin of the late disorders, and by a resolution to inspect into the public magazine, that it might be furnished suitably to exigencies. Here an altercation arose about the right of admission to it.—Though found and supplied by the Colony, it was under the direction of the Governor, without whose permission no access to it was allowed.

Before this permission had been formally obtained, a party of the town's-people forced an entrance, and took away a quantity of arms: some however were restored, by the intermediation of several of the deputies to the Assembly; but the committee appointed for the inspection, reported that the gunpowder was buried in the storehouse yard, where it had



had been damaged; the locks had been taken off the muskets; and that there was altogether a considerable deficiency of requisites.

But that which gave most offence, was the discovery of spring-guns fixed in the magazine. Some of those who had broken into it had suffered from them, and their resentment induced them to represent this manner of securing the place as unwarrantable.

All these circumstances falling out just at the opening of the session, foreboded no prosperous issue to the attempts that were necessary to be made to bring over the Assembly and Colony to the terms of the conciliatory motion. The endeavours of the Governor, however they might have been effectual at another time, were now combated by so many untoward events, that little hope remained of their meeting with any success.

The preliminary business of the session was hardly begun, when the Governor left his palace with the utmost secrecy during the night, and withdrew on board a man of war. He informed the Assembly, that his motive for taking such a step, was to provide for his personal safety, being duly convinced that popular fury was risen to such a height, that his life would be endangered, if he trusted himself any longer in a place where nothing could restrain the outrageousness of the populace.

He did not mean by this to cause an interruption of business; on the contrary, he most earnestly requested them to attend in the most serious manner to that which he had laid before them in his speech; and he would in the mean time take due measures to facilitate the communication between him and the Assembly. To this end he was of opinion, that an occasional attendance of some of the deputies that composed it, would answer every purpose. They might depend he would on his side, be as constantly attentive as ever to the functions of his station, and



evinced by his conduct, that a good understanding was what he sincerely sought.

The Assembly, on the other hand, answered this message with an address, wherein they solemnly declared their persuasion that there was no ground for the apprehensions he testified. Had he previously to the resolution he had taken, expressed the fears he mentioned, they would have obviated every motive to entertain them. His relinquishment of a place where the public business was officially transacted, would not only prove a material hindrance to it, but add to the discontent and alarms already too much diffused among the people at large. They offered, at the same time, to acquiesce in whatever he should think fit to propose, to secure himself, his family, and attendants, from any affronts. They strongly adverted to the impropriety and inconvenience of transacting business with him in his present situation. They requested him, therefore, to return to the place of his residence, where he might be assured of meeting with all the respect due to his character; and by doing which he would essentially contribute to remove those jealousies that intercepted all efforts towards reconciliation.

But these representations were ineffectual. The Governor gave them to understand, that he had been threatened in so violent and open a manner, and that the insurrections of late were become so dangerous, that he should betray a want of prudence to dwell in the midst of them. He taxed, at the same time, the House of Assembly itself with countenancing disturbances. The storehouse had been broke open while some of them were present, who did not, as they ought to have done, commit the offenders to prison. They had too, without his concurrence, taken upon themselves the custody of the magazine, which was an usurpation of authority of the most daring nature, and which plainly indicated, that  
their



their intention was to assume the government into their own hands, and to carry their own plans into execution.

He remonstrated to them, that if they were sincerely desirous of providing for his safety, they ought to enable him to exert the power annexed to his station, open the courts of judicature for the prosecution of those who disturbed the legal exercise of government, disband those people who bore arms without his lawful commission, restore the contents of the magazine, and act themselves in support of his authority in such a manner, as should convince the public that they were firmly attached to the cause of their Sovereign, and firmly determined to oppose those tumultuous and disorderly proceedings, that tended to injure the interest, and subvert the constitutional rights of Great Britain.

To accomplish these just ends, he would repair to York Town, whither, as it would be at no great distance from Williamsburgh, they might remove the place of their sitting. Here he was willing to meet, and confer with them on the means of appeasing the present troubles; and here, if they meant not utterly to reject all proffers of accommodation, they would give him the meeting, and transact the business of the session.

If, however, they would convince him by unequivocal proofs of their sincerity, that they were ready to concur in all the just demands he had made, he would not hesitate to return to Williamsburgh, and co-operate with them in putting a final period to all differences, and settling a happy re-union with the parent state on those equitable terms that were now offered to their consideration.

On these conditions, he would return to them according to their desire, and deem it the greatest honour and felicity to employ his mediation in reconciling them with Great Britain. But if their in-



tentions did not correspond with what he had expressed, his return to Williamsburgh would answer no end, but to expose him to the dangers he had mentioned, without proving of any utility whatsoever.

The reply to this message was very pointed and acrimonious. As the Governor had been severe in his imputations, they were equally bitter in their own justification, and expressed themselves in terms that tended strongly to widen the breach, and render both parties irreconcilable.

The Committee appointed to make an inquiry into the late disturbances, had now finished it. From the testimony of a great number of creditable individuals, it appeared, that the commotions among the people had arisen from an apprehension that hostile designs had been formed against them; but that tranquility and good order were now re-established. They were universally determined, however, to abide by the resolutions of the general Congress, and of their Provincial meetings. They did not, indeed, aim at independency, being thoroughly persuaded it was the mutual interest of Great Britain and the Colonies to remain united; but still they insisted on the necessity of repealing the late obnoxious acts, before any reconciliation could take place. When the Parliament complied with the wishes of the Colonies in this particular, no doubt was entertained of the immediate cessation of all discontent, and of a cordial re-union and amity with the British nation as before.

The Assembly now took into consideration the conciliatory motion of the British ministry. But they did it in the same manner as the other Colonies: they used the same reasonings against it, and rejected it with no less warmth and unanimity. They concluded their examination of this subject by declaring, that the final determination of this and



all such general matters, rested for the future with the Continental Congress. This, as representing all America, was the properest channel through which to convey to the throne a representation of all grievances : more deference and attention would, it was insinuated, be paid to that body, than to the remonstrances of a single colony.

“ We have,” said they, “ exhausted every mode of application which our invention could suggest, as proper and promising. We have decently remonstrated with Parliament ; they have added new injuries to the old. We have wearied our King with supplications : he has not deigned to answer us. We have appealed to the native honour and justice of the British nation ; but their efforts in our favour have been hitherto ineffectual.”

Such was the stile and manner of communication between the Governor and the Assembly. Charges on the one hand, and recriminations on the other : invitations to return on shore, with promises of the amplest security ; and refusals to place any confidence in the people over whom the powers of government were exercised in this singular manner.

The session now drawing to an end, the Assembly requested that he would make his appearance among them, once at least, for the final passing of the bills that lay ready for his assent. They had, during the whole session, however it had been inconvenient, acquiesced in his desire ; and waited upon him at the distance of a dozen miles, as often as a personal intercourse became necessary. He ought now, in his turn, to condescend so far, as to close the Assembly according to the usual and constitutional forms.

But this representation was as fruitless as the preceding.—The Governor insisted on the prerogative with which he was lawfully invested, of appointing the place where they should assemble ; he knew of



no bills of sufficient consequence to require the formality of his presence; and before he assented to any, he ought to have the previous examination of their propriety.

In reply to this message, the bills were sent to him. Of these some met with his approbation, and to others he objected. The Assembly again entreated him to repair to Williamsburgh, in order to pass those bills he approved of; assuring him in the most solemn manner, that they would be bound for the safety of his person; and finally requesting, that if he would not trust himself among them, he would sign a commission to pass them.

The Governor still remained inflexible in his refusal to meet them ashore, insisting that his apprehensions were well founded, and requesting in his turn, that they would wait upon him themselves on board, there to present the bills that were to receive his assent.

This was a proposal with which the Assembly would by no means comply. It terminated at once all further public intercourse between the Governor and that body. They immediately declared that such a requisition was a breach of their privileges; and that from what had passed, they had sufficient grounds to apprehend that sinister designs were entertained against the Colony. They advised people to be on their guard, and to prepare for the common defence of their country and their freedom, against the attempts that probably were at no great distance. They concluded by protestations of a dutiful attachment to the Crown and people of Great Britain, and of their readiness to adhere to them upon a constitutional foundation.

This was the solemn farewell of the Colony of Virginia to the British nation. It closed the session of the last Assembly that was held under the auspices of England, of which it was the most ancient settlement



settlement in the American hemisphere, the foundation of it having been laid by the famous Sir Walter Raleigh, near two centuries before this final separation from its mother country.

Having thus put an end to the Governor's authority, they proceeded to the election of deputies, who met in convention, and assumed the direction of the Province, in the same manner as had been done in the Province of Massachusetts. After the example of the New England people, the Virginians resigned themselves with the most implicit confidence to the management of their new governors.

Their first care was to put the Province in a proper state of defence. They raised a considerable body of men, and appointed funds to maintain them, and to defray other public charges. They published, at the same time, a justification of the measures they had taken, in which they attributed them to the necessity of providing for the immediate preservation of their freedom, their property, and all that was valuable, which were manifestly endangered by the designs that had unquestionably been formed against the just and long enjoyed rights of the Colonies. They repeated the conclusions of the last Assembly, declaring their loyal disposition towards Great Britain; but asserting in the strongest terms their determination to support their lawful claims against all opposers, and at whatever price it might cost them.

It now remained for Lord Dunmore, after the deprivation of his government, to consider in what manner he should conduct himself towards the people who had cast off their obedience. Such adherents to him as had by their activity made themselves unpopular, now repaired to him for safety.—Many of the slaves too deserted over to him. With these, and the more effectual assistance of the British  
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armed shipping on the coast, he now proposed to keep an eye upon the country, and to be in readiness to lay hold of any seasonable opportunity of thwarting the designs of the malcontents. The interfection of Virginia by the many large and navigable rivers, with which it is watered every where, made this no difficult task; as by means of these, its principal parts lie open at all times to the attempts of a keen and vigilant enemy that is master at sea.

With such view, he fitted out some vessels of sufficient force to alarm the inhabitants near the shore, but not equal to any undertaking of consequence. The truth was, that he was obliged to extort by main force the provisions he wanted, as they refused to supply him with any.

The Virginians complained, on the other hand, that he often landed with an hostile intent, setting fire to houses, destroying plantations, carrying off the slaves, and seizing on persons of the adverse party. This compelled them to stand more carefully on their defence; and produced at last continual scenes of rapine and devastation; wherein lives were lost, and mischief done to individuals, without effecting any material hurt or service to either side, and from which no reputation could be acquired to those who conducted them.

By degrees matters became more serious. Detachments of those troops levied by order of the Provincial Meeting, were now ordered to the shores of the rivers, and to the sea-coasts, which rendered attempts against the different settlements more difficult and dangerous; and occasioned, of course, more blood to be spilt in them. Enmity was now risen to such a height, that the strictest watchfulness was employed to cut off all means of subsistence from the shipping. They could obtain none any where but at the point of the sword.



Thus war, without any formal denunciation, was not the less real; and nothing but the want of a more considerable force prevented it from being carried on with more vigour and effect.

Having however collected from several quarters some companies of soldiers, the Governor determined upon an enterprize of importance. This was the burning of Hampton, a town with a good harbour. His design, through some means, came to the knowledge of the inhabitants, who made what preparations they could to obstruct it, by sinking craft in the place through which the shipping must pass, and opposing such other impediments as might prevent a landing; but the ships forced their way through them, and proceeded to fire upon the place with great fury. A body of rifle-men now came opportunely to the assistance of the town; these plied the assailants with their musketry from the shore so resolutely, and with so much dexterity, that they compelled them to retire with the loss of one of their vessels.

A proclamation was now published by the Governor, setting forth, that as the civil laws were no longer of force for the prevention of rebellion, and the punishment of traitors, it was become necessary to substitute martial law in its room, for the suppression of disorders throughout the Colony. All people able to bear arms were hereby summoned to repair to the King's standard, under the penalty of being reputed rebels; and the slaves, and servants of persons under this description, were declared free, on condition of their taking up arms in the King's service.

This proclamation gave universal offence to all the people of America. As every Colony, New England only excepted, was in a manner overrun with Negro slaves, the letting them loose upon their masters, was a measure which excited abhorrence.

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It was represented as a determination to carry resentment beyond the common bounds of humanity, and the rules established among civilized nations. It was authorizing domestic murders and assassinations, and encouraging the perpetration of all manner of barbarity. It involved in one common butchery the innocent as well as the guilty : Negroes could not discriminate between the friends and foes to the British government ; and might be led by their ignorance, or prompted by the desire of freedom, either to suspect, or pretend suspicion of the loyalty of their masters, and from such motives would forsake or rise upon them.

It was no less reprobated as impolitic in its general tendency. It removed that necessary barrier of fear and implicit obedience, which kept the blacks in such profound submission to the white people.— By setting them at large, and prompting them to face the whites with arms in their hands, it taught them ideas of equality, and placed them on a footing with those whom they had been used to consider as their superiors in the very order of nature.

The consequences of such an emancipation were altogether equally obvious and terrible. It led to horrors of every description. Self preservation would naturally set the Colonists on their constant guard against plots and machinations from those by whom they were continually surrounded : the least suspicion would occasion the exercise of severities ; these would excite resentments, and quickly be followed by desertions, insurrections, and open defiance : all confidence would vanish on either side ; downright enmity and violence would succeed ; and no other hope of safety would remain to either of the parties, than in the utter extermination of the other.

Such was the light in which the Americans represented this proclamation ; which however was attended by none of the atrocious effects that had been



been apprehended ; and served much more to exasperate than to cause them any essential prejudice.

In the mean time Lord Dunmore was at Norfolk, a place of which the inhabitants, with those of the adjacent parts, were well affected to his cause. He was joined here by considerable numbers, and he began to form hopes that he should gradually be able to raise such a force, as should enable him to restore the authority of government throughout the whole Province.

But the ruling powers exerted themselves with so much diligence, that a large body was speedily collected and put in motion against him. On receiving intelligence of this, he posted himself at a place called the Great Bridge, on the road to Norfolk, through which they were necessitated to pass in marching to this town. Here he threw up some works, well lined with cannon, intending to make a resolute stand with the whole force he could muster.

But this was very inconsiderable : he had no more than about two hundred regulars ; his remaining strength consisted of an undisciplined assemblage of white and black people. With these, however, he courageously resolved to encounter the enemy, who were now advanced very near him, and had also cast up an intrenchment within the reach of his guns.

After observing each others motions during some days, Lord Dunmore grew impatient of inaction, and formed a plan to storm their intrenchment. Captain Fordyce, an officer of great bravery, commanded on this occasion. In the front of their works lay a narrow causeway, which was the only avenue to them. The Captain, at the head of a body of grenadiers, advanced upon this path to their intrenchments, and attacked them with asto-



nishing resolution. The enemies works were so constructed, that while he was attempting their front, his own flanks were exposed to a severe fire. The valour of this gallant officer, and of the brave men that followed him, met with unsurmountable obstacles : he was slain with a number of them. Such was the obstinacy with which they fought, and the danger of the service they went upon, that not one individual among them escaped without a wound.

They made good their retreat under the guns of their own works, the enemy not venturing to pursue them. The only prisoners made were such as, on account of their wounds, were unable to retire from the field. Those among them who were natives of Britain, met with very civil usage from the Provincials ; but the natives of America experienced great severity ; and were treated as men who had deserted their own colours, and fought under those of an enemy.

After this repulse, the encampment at the Great Bridge was broke up ; and as the enemy was daily increasing in number, and there appeared no reasonable hope of being able to resist him, Lord Dunmore withdrew again to his shipping. It was now equally numerous, and crouded with people of all denominations, who were his adherents, and who had fled to it as the only place of protection from the resentment of the Provincial party.

While Lord Dunmore was thus exerting himself on the coasts of Virginia, a plan was forming to invade it, together with the other southern colonies, on their back and inland parts. The people in those settlements were considered as strongly attached to the English government, and it was expected that large numbers of them would be disposed to take up arms in its support. It was also supposed that some of the Indian tribes in the neighbourhood of  
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those parts, might be brought to join them. All this would form a force sufficient to make an effectual impression on the enemy, and to open a passage in the very heart of the Colonies, through which they might make an irruption into any Province they chose particularly to attack.

Virginia was the Colony chiefly aimed at by this scheme. The projector of it was Mr. Conelly, a Pennsylvanian, a man completely qualified for its execution. He was one of those restless and daring individuals that seemed born for the tempestuous period they lived in, and with whom America abounded at this time.

He communicated his project to Lord Dunmore, with the activity and resoluteness of whose temper it perfectly corresponded. It met accordingly with his entire approbation; and Mr. Conelly set out immediately to carry it forwards with all possible expedition. Through a multiplicity of obstacles he reached the back settlements, and there found means to negotiate with great secrecy, a treaty with the Indians situated on the Ohio, and to bring over to his design the people in those remote districts. On his returning to Lord Dunmore with the intelligence of his success, he was dispatched to Boston with proper recommendations. Here he was commissioned by General Gage to act in this business as Colonel and Commander, with promises of being thoroughly supported.

By this plan it was agreed, that the British forces at Detroit, and the forts in its vicinity, with those that were stationed in others of those distant settlements, should each furnish as many men as could possibly be spared. With these, which would altogether form a considerable body, the Colonel was to proceed as early the next spring as practicable, to Pittsburgh, where he was to establish his head quar-



ters, till the disaffected party there was entirely suppressed, and the friends of government collected to a sufficient number to form them into regiments. From Pittsburgh he was to cross the Allegany Mountains, and penetrate into Virginia. Here, after leaving fort Cumberland strongly garrisoned, he was to fall down the river Potomack, and seize upon Alexandria, where it was concerted that Lord Dunmore should meet him with the fleet under his command, and all the force he could gather. Alexandria was then to be strongly fortified, and made a place of arms, and the centre of their operations. By these means the friends of government would be able to declare themselves without restraint, and to form a general junction with facility; and what was of more importance than all the rest, the communication between the northern and southern Colonies would be effectually cut off.

Such was the vast and comprehensive plan projected by Mr. Conelly. He had made a considerable progress on his journey towards Detroit; and was now on the back frontiers of Maryland, and had seemingly escaped the principal dangers, when he was unluckily discovered by one of those unexpected accidents that so often baffle the best concerted designs.

A tradesman with whom he was acquainted and had dealt, met him on the road, and directly gave information to the nearest committee: he was immediately seized upon suspicion, and his papers discovered the whole design. They were communicated to the Congress, and the Colonel was thrown into prison.

In this manner was frustrated a scheme equally bold and judiciously arranged, and which was now almost on the point of execution. It is not improbable that had he not been thus arrested in the middle



de of his career, Colonel Conelly, from the acuteness and activity of his character, would have conducted the operations with which he was entrusted, with equal skill and expedition; and would have proved one of the most dangerous enemies whom the Congress would have had to encounter.

In the mean time, the retreat of Lord Dunmore from Norfolk, left that place entirely at the mercy of the Provincials. The loyalists had been rather severe upon their adversaries during their possession of those parts: this severity was now retorted upon them; and all those who had remained on shore experienced much ill treatment, and many mortifications.

The condition of those who had fled for shelter on board the shipping was not less distressful; as they were cut off from all communication ashore, they were destitute of means to provide themselves with necessaries, and were reduced to the most dreadful extremities. In such a situation, the calls of nature rendered them desperate, and they neglected no opportunity of venturing to land in every place where they expected to find provisions. This occasioned perpetual skirmishes between them and the Provincial troops that lay in wait to intercept them.

During these transactions, a man of war of some force arrived in Norfolk harbour. It was now resolved to insist upon their permitting the fleet to be furnished with necessaries, and that they should desist from annoying the shipping with their musketry, which only tended to the destroying of men without necessity, and could hardly be viewed in any light but that of absolute murder.

The fact was, that the American soldiery, chiefly composed of rifle-men, stationing themselves in the houses, and upon the wharfs opposite to the shipping,



ping, took every opportunity of firing at the people on board, and destroyed some of them daily.

The requisition made by the Governor was accompanied with a menace to fire upon that part of the town from which the annoyance came, in case they refused to comply. But their answer was a peremptory denial of both his demands. In consequence of this, notice was given to the inhabitants of what was intended, that they might previously remove themselves out of danger; and after allowing them a due space of time for that purpose, that side of the town was cannonaded which lay nearest the water, and a party of sailors and marines was landed, the more effectually to set fire to the houses in that quarter.

It was not the intention of Lord Dunmore to extend the destruction any further. The Provincials, it has been said, completed it, by setting fire to those parts that lay at a distance from the water-side, and which, as the wind was favourable to them, would from their situation have escaped the conflagration. It has even been positively asserted, that almost at the very moment the houses near the shore were set on fire, the flames were also perceived in several parts that were farthest from them, and that they were burnt by the direction of the Virginian Congress itself, in order to put an end at once to all hopes in the loyalists of receiving any aid from that place.

In this unfortunate manner was destroyed one of the finest towns in Virginia, and the first for-commerce and opulence. The computation of the damage done on this occasion, amounted to between three and four hundred thousand pounds. Before this disaster, its condition was so flourishing, that the annual rents of the houses exceeded ten thousand pounds.



So great became now the inveteracy to the loyalists, that in order to deprive them of all means of sustenance, the plantations of which the situation exposed them to incursions from the shipping, were totally destroyed, and the inhabitants compelled to remove up the country with their cattle, and all the effects they could carry off.



## C H A P. XVI.

*Transactions in North and South Carolina, and in  
Massachuset.*

1775.

WHILE Virginia was suffering in this cruel manner from intestine dissensions, its neighbours, the Carolinas, were much in the same distracted state. In North Carolina, Governor Martin, a gentleman of great vigour and activity, was involved in perpetual contests with the various committees and associations it had formed, and especially with the Provincial Congress. He was accused of having, like Lord Dunmore, endeavoured to excite a rebellion among the negroes; and upon that, and other charges, he was declared a public enemy to the Colonies, and to that particularly of which, as Governor, he ought to have had the interest most at heart; and all persons were, in consequence, interdicted from any communication with him.

He replied to this declaration by a bold and spirited proclamation; wherein he cleared himself of malevolence to the Province, and justified his conduct by a variety of reasons: animadverting at the same time with the utmost freedom and pointedness, upon all their proceedings, and reprobating them as inimical to peace, and repugnant to the duty and obedience which they owed to Great Britain, and tending manifestly to breed ill blood, and kindle sedition and rebellion.

The wrath and resentment of the Provincial Congress was provoked to such a pitch by this proclamation, that they voted it a libel of the most injurious



rious and defamatory nature; loaded it with every opprobrious epithet they could devise, and ordered it to be publicly burned by the common executioner.

Notwithstanding the violence and enmity of the Congress, the Governor entertained a full expectation of being able to defeat their designs. He strongly relied on the loyalty of those who were settled in the interior parts of the Province, and such as had lately emigrated from Scotland, who were chiefly Highlanders, a brave and hardy race of men.—With these he doubted not to form a numerous body of firm and determined adherents, to whom the Congress would not find it in their power to oppose an equal force.

While arrangements were forming to bring them together, he thought it prudent, for his own personal security, to fortify his residence at Newbern, in order to prevent a surprize from people, whose inveteracy he was apprehensive might prompt them to offer him some insult. His intention was to replenish it with warlike stores, and to strengthen it so well, as to set all attempts against him at defiance. He had partly executed his design, when, on the moving in of some guns, a suspicion of it arose, followed immediately by an insurrection, which appeared so dangerous, that he found it most advisable instantly to withdraw, and shelter himself on board an armed vessel.

The populace rushed into his house in search of what they suspected, and discovered accordingly gunpowder and ball, with other military stores, concealed under-ground, in the garden. This confirmed the surmises that had been spread concerning his hostile intentions, and he was now regarded as a man with whom it was no longer necessary, or proper, to keep any measures.



In the mean time, similar methods of proceeding were adopted throughout this Province as in the other Colonies. An upper council, and committees of safety, were nominated, and every other regulation made that was judged requisite for good order and government. They provided in the same manner for the public defence, by calling out the militia, and raising additional forces. They acted, in short, with the same spirit and determination as their neighbours. They framed a public address to all the subjects of the British empire, in the same stile as those that have already been mentioned, declaring their readiness to be reconciled upon constitutional terms, and their resolution to admit of no other.

In South Carolina the like disturbances prevailed. The people charged their Governor, Lord William Campbell, who had opposed their proceedings with great spirit and perseverance, with having treated with the Indians for their assistance against them, and induced the inhabitants of the back-settlements to attack their countrymen. The commotions raised upon this occasion were so violent, that he was compelled to retreat on board a man of war.

After his departure, they took the government into their own hands; and, in order to obviate any danger that might arise from the negotiations that had been carried on with the back settlers, they deputed Mr. Drayton to confer with them, a gentleman famous for his opposition to the British government, and at that time the most popular man in the Province. He proceeded to that part of the country at the head of a considerable body of men. An agreement was accordingly entered into between both parties; in which all differences were settled to their mutual satisfaction; the back-settlers binding themselves to a peaceable demeanour, and in no shape to oppose the measures that should be adopted by



by the Provincial meeting, nor to afford any assistance to the British military. In other respects they were left at freedom to act as they deemed it most expedient for their own welfare. They were to be permitted to remain perfectly neutral in the present quarrel between Great Britain and the Colonies, and were by no means to be subject to any detriment for refusing to espouse their cause.

Having delivered themselves from all apprehensions on that quarter, their next business was to settle a form of government. They appointed a council of safety to consist of thirteen members, who were to be assisted in cases of difficulty and importance, by a committee of one hundred. Hearing, at the same time, that preparations were making in England, which were particularly levelled at this Colony, they neglected no means to put it in a posture of defence, by raising forces, diligently training them, and especially by fortifying Charles Town in the strongest manner they were able.

During these transactions in the south of the Continent, the military operations in the north still continued, though not with the same vigour as at the commencement of the campaign. The British troops in Boston were too much diminished, and weakened, through sickness and fatigue, to undertake any hazardous attempt; and the Provincials thought, on the other hand, that they did enough in keeping them close confined in that town.

In the beginning of October, General Gage resigned the command of the British forces to General Howe, and took his departure for England. The new commander in chief had innumerable difficulties to contend with. The number of mal-contents among the inhabitants was very great; and they made it their continual business to convey the speediest intelligence of all that was transacted in the town, to their friends without. This, from the situation and extensiveness



temperances of the place, and other circumstances, it was impossible to prevent. A scarcity of fresh provisions still continued, which was distressingly felt by the garrison, the sick especially, who were very numerous. The rooted antipathy of the generality of the natives, made it exceedingly difficult to discriminate between the well and the ill-affected, and prevented any dependence being placed on either. Thus the prudence and sagacity of the commander in chief was seconded by none of those helps, that would in his case have proved most useful and efficacious. He could trust thoroughly none but his own people, in those exigencies that required most information and advice.

In order to obviate, as affectually as it lay in his power, the dangers arising from this perpetual communication, and to prevent as much as possible the facility with which it had been carried on hitherto, a proclamation was issued, by which the inhabitants were forbidden to quit the town without permission, on pain of suffering military execution if discovered and seized, and to be arraigned as guilty of treason if they should effect their escape, and to forfeit their effects. Such as obtained a license to depart, were prohibited, under heavy penalties, from taking with them above a certain quantity of money. An association was also directed to be formed, by which those who remained in the town, were bound to act in its defence: such of them as were thought proper to be selected for that purpose, were to be divided into companies, and properly armed and disciplined; the others were to contribute a sum of money in lieu of their personal service.

It had been hoped by some friends to government, that at the expiration of the time for which the Provincial soldiers were enlisted, the majority would return to their homes, after so long and unusual an absence. The term was now approaching,  
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and the Congress itself was not without its fears upon this account. For the preventing of an event, that would have been so prejudicial to their cause, they deputed a committee of their most popular and respected members, to co-operate with General Washington in keeping the continental army from disbanding. In this they succeeded to their fullest expectations. The whole army re-enlisted for the term of a twelvemonth.

That object which the Colonies found it most difficult to compass in their military exertions, was the procuring a sufficiency of gunpowder. The want of it prevented the execution and the attempt of many a design. They had been uncommonly industrious in the preparation of the several ingredients of which this manufacture is composed; but time only could bring this resource to that state of abundance which was at present so much needed. Mean while their chief supplies were from abroad; but they came in very slowly, and amidst a multitude of obstacles. The communication with those European countries from whence it was to be had, was intercepted, and the navigation of their own shipping was so diligently traced, and so closely watched, that the importation of this indispensable necessary, was attended with every kind of difficulty and discouragement.

As a proof to what extremities they were reduced from the scantiness of gunpowder, some of their own officers, it has been said, acknowledged, that while they lay before Boston, they were at one time so short, that had they been attacked, they must immediately have fled, and disembodied themselves. At Bunker's Hill and Lexington, many had expended their whole stock before the business was over.

To remedy so essential a deficiency, no efforts were spared, and no expedients left untried. The swiftest sailing



sailing vessels were dispatched to the coast of Guinea, in Africa, where they purchased all the powder that was to be sold among the European shipping that was trading along the shores of that extensive country : they bought it under pretence of making up their own assortments of articles for the trade of that country ; and they went away unsuspected. Another supply was brought from the island of Bermuda, where the crew of a vessel, sent for that purpose, landed in the night, and plundered the magazine, that lay at some distance from the town, of all the powder it contained.

In default of action between the regulars and the Provincials at Boston, a predatory war was now carried on along the coast of New England, which resembled, in some measure, that which the people of Virginia were experiencing upon their own shores, and arose also from similar motives, the necessity of procuring fresh provisions. As the inhabitants were no less refractory and violent in their conduct, and exercised all the resistance they were able, the consequence was, that they were treated occasionally with equal severity.

Among other places that suffered in the course of these hostilities, was the town of Falmouth, situated in Casco Bay, in the Province of Main, which is the name given to the northern parts of Massachusetts, from which it is divided by the Colony of New Hampshire. It was a commercial thriving place, consisting of about five hundred houses. Its harbour was particularly commodious for its proximity to those parts of the country, where ship timber was plenty ; and it was here the shipping from England took in yearly a large quantity of masts, especially for the navy. A vessel was lying here at this time for that very purpose : a difference unhappily arose about the loading of her, which occasioned a violent disturbance. It proceeded to such  
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length, that in resentment for the peoples behaviour, a resolution was taken to destroy the town, which was effected accordingly, after notice had been given to the inhabitants to remove with what effects they could carry off.

The destruction of Falmouth was grievously resented by the Provincials. The Congress of Massachusetts, which was then sitting at Watertown, determined immediately to take every possible measure for the protection of their coast, and with that intent passed an act for granting letters of marque and reprisal, and erected Courts of Admiralty for the trial and adjudication of all British prizes brought into their harbours.

To qualify, in some respect, so daring a measure, they declared at the same time, that their sole intention was to guard their sea coasts from violence and depredation, and to secure the navigation of their own vessels : to this end those ships only were liable to be captured, that brought supplies to the forces that were acting against them.

While hostilities were thus carried on by land, and preparations were making to extend them to the sea, numbers of individuals in America were zealously striving, by means of their connections in England, to avert the consequences that must inevitably ensue from a continuation of the unnatural war entered into by Great Britain and her Colonies. They represented the evident danger of adding fresh causes of irritation to a people who were already sufficiently exasperated. Their affections, though of long standing in favour of a country from which they originated, were now almost broken, and hung on so slender a thread, that little was wanting to disconnect them from England for ever. No time was to be lost in healing the wound, while it might yet be closed ; but no reliance was to be placed upon distant hopes ; the quarrel was not of a nature to be  
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be made up whenever Britain should think proper. The season for action was beginning to draw towards an end; the Americans would employ that leisure in pondering upon the future, and reflecting on the past: the events of the present campaign had been rather favourable to them; and the prospect of the increasing enmity of Britain, from its vast preparations against them, might, in all likelihood, drive them into measures, which, if once adopted, would set reconciliation at a woeful distance.

They still, however, disclaimed all ideas of that tendency: they unanimously protested that they took up arms with no other intent, than to maintain their rights, and to obtain a redress of grievances: they looked no further at present: a separation from the parent state was an object foreign to their wishes; but if the dispute still lasted, who could tell how it would terminate? If bloodshed continued much longer, habitual enmity would obliterate all former friendship, and become at last familiar to their feelings.

Such was the matter of the epistolary representations that were continually arriving from America; but whatever impression they might make upon those to whom they were addressed, they produced no effect with those persons whose influence would have been serviceable in promoting the ends for which they were written.

In the midst of those violent scenes that were acting in America, remonstrances of this kind were not unfrequent even to the gentlemen of the army itself. The person who chiefly excited the attention of the public on this account, was General Lee, whose letters to Lord Percy and General Burgoyne, were originals in their kind, and fully exhibited the peculiar disposition of that celebrated officer.

While these conciliatory attempts were made on the one hand, a circumstance that much contributed

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ed on the other to embitter and alienate the minds of both parties in America, was the acrimonious stile of their public correspondence. As the letters that passed between them were often occasioned by erroneous reports, and mistated facts, they were of course dictated sometimes by the keenest anger and resentment, and produced the like emotions in those to whom they were directed.

The rancour that always accompanies a civil war, rendered individuals on both sides extremely impatient at any deviation from the friendly treatment, to which, by habits of long intimacy, they were reciprocally accustomed. Every proof of enmity, however slight, still was heavily felt, as proceeding from those who were once friends and associates. From motives of this kind, the parties who complained of being aggrieved, were apt, in the bitterness of their impatience, and inveteracy, frequently to aggravate the causes of their complaints: this of course inflamed the minds of those who were interested in protecting them from ill usage, and engaged them to espouse their defence with all the warmth of indignation.

A remarkable instance of this nature happened at Boston, while invested by the Provincial army, and produced those memorable letters between the respective commanders, of which so much notice was taken at the time, and which created such a diversity of opinions concerning their merits and propriety.

That with which General Washington closed his correspondence with General Gage, was conceived in terms of peculiar spiritedness and energy, and drew a strong picture of his character and principles, as well as of those that animated his countrymen at that time.

“Whether,” said he, “British or American mercy, fortitude, and patience, are most pre-emi-



ment—whether our victorious citizens, whom the hand of tyranny has forced into arms to defend their property and freedom, or the mercenary instruments of lawless domination, avarice, and revenge, best deserve the appellation of rebels, and the punishment of that cord, which your affected clemency has forborn to inflict—whether the authority under which I act is usurped, or founded upon the genuine principles of liberty, such considerations are altogether foreign to the subject of our correspondence. I purposely avoid all political disquisition; nor shall I avail myself of those advantages which the sacred cause of my country, of liberty, and human nature, give me over you; much less shall I stoop to retort any invective.”

After justifying the Provincials from the cruel treatment of the prisoners, imputed to them, “you advise me,” said he, “to give free operation to truth, to punish misrepresentation and falsehood. If experience stamps value upon counsel, your’s must have a weight, which few can claim; you best can tell how far the convulsions which have brought such ruin on both countries, and shaken the mighty empire of Britain to its foundation, may be traced to these malignant causes.

“You affect, Sir, to despise all rank not derived from the same source with your own. I cannot conceive one more honourable than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people, the purest source and original fountain of all power. Far from making it a plea for cruelty, a mind of true magnanimity, and enlarged ideas, would comprehend and respect it.”

Such were the principal parts of this celebrated letter, which was by the Americans represented as the completest model of the stile becoming his station, and the occasion to which it was adapted, and was at the same time commended in every part of Europe



Europe where it was read, and even in England itself, as the only answer he could make in his present circumstances.

In this letter General Washington boasted, not unjustly, that far from being obliged to compel, or to request the assistance of any of his countrymen, he was rather embarrassed with the numbers who crowded to his camp, from the sole impulse of love to their country.

Certain it is, that without adverting to the rectitude or erroneousness of their notions, the Americans were at this period animated with the fullest persuasion that they were acting the part of true patriots, and combating for those objects which are held sacred and inviolable in all countries.

It is no less true, that they were countenanced and upheld in this persuasion by all the European world. Compositions of every kind were published in their favour; their cause was maintained by a number of works in prose, and poems were written in praise of their valour and successes. The French, as already observed, were not only the foremost of any people in their secret encouragement, and open applause and vindication of the Americans, but lost no opportunity of exercising their natural vivacity, upon this subject in a variety of ways. They celebrated every fortunate event that befel the Provincials, not only in odes and epic strains, but in a multiplicity of songs, epigrams, and stanzas, and other productions of a similar nature.

With so many inducements before them, it is by no means surprizing the Americans should feel and express such uncommon warmth and vehemence upon every occasion, and become perfect enthusiasts in a cause wherein they considered their duty and their interest as equally concerned, and to neglect the defence of which, they viewed in the double light of treason and impiety. When actuated



by such motives, men are never lukewarm and remiss; and these were unquestionably the ruling principles in America at this time.

The force and animation that accompanied their discussion of public matters, showed how deeply they were affected by them, and with what weight and seriousness they dwelt upon their thoughts, and took up the whole of their study and attention.

A strong specimen of the maxims and sentiments by which they were governed, was exhibited in a famous speech made by one of the Delegates to the Continental Congress of the present year, on the necessity of their taking up arms.

“The great God,” said he, “who is the searcher of all things, will witness for me, that I have spoken from the bottom and purity of my heart.—It is an arduous consideration we are now upon, and surely we have considered it earnestly. I may think of every gentleman here, as I know of myself. For seven years past, this question has filled the day with anxious thought, and the night with care.—The God, to whom we appeal, must judge us. If the grievances of which we complain did not come upon us unprovoked, and unexpected, when our hearts were filled with respectful affection for our parent state, and with loyalty to our King, let slavery, the worst of human ills, be our portion! Nothing less than seven years of insulted complaints, and reiterated wrongs, could have shaken such rooted sentiments. Unhappily for us, submission and slavery are the same; and we have only the melancholy alternative left, of resistance, or of ruin.

The last petition of this Congress to the King, contained all that our unhappy situation could suggest. It represented our grievances, implored redress, and professed our readiness to contribute for  
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the general wants, to the utmost of our abilities, when constitutionally required."

He then adverted to the fate of that petition, and the determination of Parliament to concur with the ministry in pronouncing the Congress an illegal assembly, and their grievances meer pretences.

"I forbear," continued he, "to enter into a detail of those acts, which from their atrociousness, must be felt and remembered for ever. They are calculated to carry fire and sword, famine and desolation through these flourishing Colonies. The extremes of rage and revenge against the worst of enemies, could not dictate measures more desperate and destructive.

There are some people who tremble at the approach of war: they fear that it must put an inevitable stop to the further progress of these Colonies, and ruin irretrievably those benefits which the industry of almost two centuries has called forth from this once savage land. I may commend the anxiety of those men, without praising their judgment.

War, like other evils, is often wholesome. The waters that stagnate, corrupt; the storm that works the ocean into rage, renders it salutary; Heaven has given us nothing unmixed: the rose is not without the thorn. War calls forth the great virtues and efforts, which would sleep in the gentle bosom of peace. It exercises those talents, which if unemployed, are no better than if they did not exist: it opens resources which would lie concealed under the inactivity of tranquil times; it rouses and enlightens; it produces animation, energy, enterprisingness, and success.

Let us consult history.—Did not the Grecian republics prosper amidst continual warfare? Their prosperity, their splendour, and their power, arose from the animating spirit of war. Did not Rome,



the mistress of the world, attain her greatness by the same means? Trace back the history of our parent state: whether you view her arraying Angles against Danes, Saxons against Normans, the Barons against despotic Princes, or the civil wars of the red and white Roses, or those between the nation and the Stuarts, you see her in a state of almost continual warfare. But amidst her civil contentions, she flourished and grew strong; trained in them, she sent her hardy legions forth, and planted the standards of England on the battlements of Paris.

“ The beautiful fabric of her constitutional liberty was reared and cemented in blood. From this fulness of her strength those scions issued, which taking deep root in this fruitful soil, have reared their heads, and spread abroad their branches like the cedars of Lebanon.

“ Why fear we then to pursue through apparent evil real good? The war upon which we are to enter is necessary, and therefore just. Men whose only hope is in their arms, have a right to take them up. We fight to prevent our country, brought to such beauty through the infinite toil and hazard of our forefathers and ourselves, from becoming the prey of that more desolating, cruel spoiler, than war, pestilence, and famine,—absolute rule, and lawless extortion!

“ Our sufferings have been great; our endurance long:—Every effort of patience, complaint, and supplication, has been exhausted. Let us therefore consult only how we shall defend our liberties with dignity and success. Our parent state will then think us worthy of her, when she sees, that together with her liberty, we inherit her rigid resolution of maintaining it against all invaders. She calls us her children; let us by the spiritedness of our



our behaviour, give her reason to pride herself in the relationship."

Such was the stile and method of arguing in use among the Americans at this time. It communicated itself from the highest to the lowest classes among them. It was the language of Congress, and of every Provincial Meeting throughout the continent: it was that of all private companies. Men seemed regardless of all other objects but those which related to their present situation. The histories of all fortunate oppositions to tyrannical power were now read, and studied with uncommon assiduity.—The revolutions that had established popular liberty on the ruins of oppression, were pointed out to public observation; and the resistance that brought them about, was held out for their imitation. All the parallel circumstances that represented a similitude between themselves and those nations that had struggled for their freedom, were laid before them, particularly those which the history of England afforded.

It was chiefly upon the precedents they found in this, they built the propriety and lawfulness of their resistance. It was, said they, full of encouragements and authorities in their favour. The reigns of the Plantagenets, and of the Tudors, afforded a sufficient number. But without looking back so far, the example of those resolute Englishmen who withstood the designs of Charles the First, was, in their opinion, the most apposite case to their own.

It was at this time, said they, the doctrine of opposition to unlawful power was best understood, and most properly exerted. Since that æra, it had been fully and explicitly established, not only in meer theory, but in constant practice. The English history from that period is a perpetual confirmation of the persuasion of the people of England, that government was instituted solely for the bene-



fit of the governed, and that all ideas of a different tendency, are inconsistent with the common-sense and feelings of mankind.

To this persuasion the Revolution was owing, and the settlement of the Crown in the Hanover line. Both these events were authorised by the determination of the people, to suffer no inconveniences from a compliance with the absurd tenet, that an hereditary right subsisted in the individuals of particular families, to govern that community, of which, from a concurrence of causes, they happened to become the principal members.

But England was not the only country that afforded instances of the resolution taken by the community, to endure no oppression. Two illustrious states in Europe owed their existence and prosperity to the conduct now adopted by America. The inhabitants of Switzerland, and those of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands, had preceded them in the same noble career. They too had been oppressed, and had by courage and perseverance, not only resisted oppression, but cast off the yoke of the oppressor.

The case of the last of these two nations bore a remarkable similitude to their own. They had long endeavoured by peaceable means to obtain a redress of their many grievances. They had petitioned, they had remonstrated; they had pleaded their cause with coolness and moderation; they had used every argument, and every entreaty to prevail on their oppressors to desist from ill usage: they even submitted to severities, rather than be thought seditious, and patiently bowed their necks beneath a weight of calamities, that had almost crushed them, before they could bring themselves to make a stand against their tyrants.

It was not until they were duly convinced, that patience only served to harden the hearts of their  
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unfeeling rulers, and to encourage them to proceed in their despotic measures, that they took at last the resolution to remain no longer in a state of passiveness and forbearance, which had occasioned an accumulation of distress upon them, and exposed them no less to contempt than to harsh treatment.

Taught by repeated experience, that acquiescence under injuries is always followed by their repetition, they began by laying aside their obedience to illegal decrees, and by drawing the sword in defence of their just rights; still however professing allegiance to their sovereign, and willingness to lay down their arms, on condition of being reinstated in the privileges of which they had been deprived.

But these offers were rejected with a haughtiness, that compelled them, much against their will to continue the resistance they had begun. No mitigation of the tyranny they had endured was expected, and the most dreadful menaces were thrown out against them: cruelty and inhumanity in the extreme, accompanied the hostilities that were exercised against them, and no hopes remained of any sincere reconciliation. In such circumstances, it would have been the height of imprudence to trust men who had been guilty of such enormities, and had thereby forfeited all regard and confidence, and could be viewed in no other light than that of a bloody and barbarous enemy.

Impelled by these motives, they determined at length to have recourse to the last remedy of an aggrieved and oppressed people, to cast off the yoke that galled them, to take the management of their affairs into their own hands, and to declare themselves independent and free.

They fulfilled their determination accordingly, and had no cause to repent it. They maintained their independence with a spirit and fortitude that faced all obstacles; they struggled against a power incom-



incomparably superior to their own, with a perseverance that rendered them proof against all hardships; and after a contest that astonished the world by its duration, they came out of it at last completely victorious, and established a commonwealth, which, for the extent of territory it possesses, is the most populous, the most opulent, and the most powerful state, that ever was recorded in history.

Such were the representations and arguments laid before the people of America, to encourage them to act with firmness and resolution in the measures they had adopted. Though they were not invited in a direct manner to go the same lengths the Dutch had done, yet they were so fully reminded of them, that it was easy to perceive at what the citation of them aimed at; and that by seasoning their minds with reflections of this nature, they would be duly prepared for the execution of that great design, which was now agitating in the councils of their leaders.

In order further to animate them, the actual situation of England, and the character of the English at the present day, was drawn with that height of colouring which was most favourable to the views of America. England was described as deriving all its greatness and importance from its dominions in that continent. Its principal trade and opulence arose from that quarter. It had, during the last triumphant war, enabled Britain to overcome her ancient and most formidable enemies. It had supplied her military and marine with some of her bravest soldiers and stoutest sailors. America had, at that time, covered the West Indian ocean with her trading vessels and her privateers, and was become herself an object of terror to all the enemies of Great Britain.

The base imputation of timidity and backwardness in military affairs, had been thrown out  
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merely to encourage the English commonalty to enlist in those regiments that were intended to be employed against them. Those who knew the Americans, were amply convinced that in those qualifications that constitute a good soldier, they were by no means deficient, and were equal, if not superior, to the English themselves.—Of what was the bulk of the English army made up, but of the very refuse of the nation? The laborious working individuals knew their interest too well, to give up their liberty and a comfortable livelihood, for so slavish a profession.

When trained and disciplined in the tactics now most prevalent, still their superiority was a matter of great doubt. In the field of competition with America, Britain had objects of the most serious consideration to view. It was not barely the regularity with which a man went through the parade of exercise, that was now to be attended to. That science, such as it was, might be soon attained. But had those individuals into whose hands England now trusted her arms, been brought up in those habits of hardiness that fit a man for war? Could they handle the pickaxe, the hatchet, and the spade, with the same readiness as the Americans? These were implements with which every American soldier was acquainted; but to which few of the British soldiers were used; or if they once had been, had now forgotten it in the slothful life they led in England. In this respect the Americans might be compared with the Hebrews of old, who, while employed in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, after their return from the captivity of Babylon, were compelled to hold the trowel in the one hand, and the sword in the other. In the same manner the Americans were no less closely pressed; they were called from the plough and the harrow, and obliged to run to their muskets for

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the defence of their houses, and possessions, and the preservation of their persons from the hands of the enemy.

There was, however, one circumstance which every American ought constantly and thankfully to bear in his mind. Without wearing a soldier's garb, they perfectly understood the use of a firelock. They had been taught it from their childhood; it was the pastime and amusement of all, as well as the occupation of many; and, from the rural life to which they were in general habituated, they were the most expert handlers of that principal instrument in war, of any people perhaps upon earth.

But could as much be said of the English?—Allowing their native courage to equal that of any nation, was it not materially restrained by the disuse, or to speak with more truth, by the prohibition of fire arms amongst the lower classes, who ought, as the most numerous part of the community, to be best practised in them. Here, again, the superior freedom of an American appeared in a striking light. While he ranged at large over his lands, without apprehending that a rude game-keeper should wrest the gun out of his hands, an English countryman durst not be seen with such an instrument even upon his own ground. Who would not imagine, that with all the boasted liberty of England, the gentry were particularly studious to depress the spirit of the vulgar? No law that ever was enacted by Parliament, and submitted to by a free people, was ever more effectually calculated to destroy the warlike disposition of a nation, than that which in England is called the game act. It showed two things, that the upper classes are shamefully inclined to tyrannize, and that the lower are much more easily made to obey, than the world has been taught to believe.



It showed, too, the difference between the English commonalty at this day, and that of times past. Their expertness in the military weapons then used was such, that no people in Europe could equal them. Their archers, especially, were the strength of their armies, and the terror of their enemies. Their fame was so great, that in the treaties of alliance with other Princes, they always carefully stipulated for as large a number of English archers as they could possibly obtain.

The yeomanry of England had been, indeed, but was no more, its glory. They were now confounded in that croud of insignificant clamourers for liberty and reformation of abuses, which filled the land from one end to the other. It was asserting no untruth to say, that were the liberties of England to be invaded as those of America had been, it was much to be doubted, whether the English yeomanry would defend them with the same vigour as the yeomanry of America. It was undeniably much less qualified for such a trial, by its general unskilfulness in arms, and still more by that want of public spirit which was now becoming so common a complaint amongst all classes in England.

Nor were the English commonalty superior in bodily strength and appearance, or in aptness to learn the trade of war, to the natives of America. The activity and dexterity of these in all matters relating to warfare could not be exceeded, and excited the astonishment and admiration of all impartial men. No people that had ever been called forth to the field so suddenly, had, in so short a space of time, made a greater, if so great a proficiency.

The uncommon excellence of the British troops in point of regularity and discipline, had been much insisted on. But proofs in abundance, both from ancient and modern times, could be adduced, that regular and disciplined troops, as they were  
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vauntingly called, were not so invincible as prejudice and imbecility of apprehension were so ready to represent them. The Roman legions that fought and vanquished Pyrrhus, were a bold and intrepid militia: yet he and Alexander were deemed by Hannibal, a competent judge, the greatest of all commanders; and his army was composed of Greeks, at that time the most conversant of men in tactics, and all military knowledge.

Who were they that saved Carthage when menaced with destruction by an army of veterans consisting of seventy thousand men, masters of all the territory round that city, and who had reduced it to the most deplorable extremities? This veteran army was defeated and cut to pieces by its own embodied citizens, worn down with incessant toils, and brought almost to the brink of despair; but inspired with that determination to stand their ground to the last, which true patriotism is more able to render efficacious than any other motive.

Among the Athenians, so famous for their valour and their martial skill, none but citizens were thought proper to be admitted into their military bodies; and yet what men could behave more bravely and expertly? They were an over-match for all the other Grecian republics, and disputed the prize of warlike superiority with the Lacedemonians themselves, who were, in fact, a nation of meer soldiers and disciplinarians; whilst they, on the contrary, were a mixture of all professions—merchants, tradesmen, mechanics, and artificers of all denominations.

In modern times precedents were no less numerous. One of the greatest victories recorded in history, was obtained by the invincible bravery of undisciplined countrymen and citizens, fighting for their liberty against a powerful invader, at the head of the most regular army at that time in Europe.

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These victorious citizens were the Swiss; their invader was Charles the Bold, sovereign of the Low Countries, the most opulent prince, and the most formidable warrior in his day.

The Dutch afforded them examples of the same nature. The armies employed against them, were commanded by the greatest Generals of the age, and were composed of men who had for years been used to arms and conquest: but their career was arrested, to the surprize of all the world, by a people who had hitherto led a peaceable commercial life, and who never would have thought of war, had they not been compelled into it for their own preservation.

In the last century, Portugal had shown that meer discipline was not sufficient to overcome courage and perseverance. The troops sent to reduce that kingdom after it had shaken off the Spanish yoke, were inferior to none in Europe; yet they could not subdue it, though chiefly defended by new raised militia.

In the present century, three striking instances could be cited of the prodigious superiority which patriotic valour is able to confer over all military advantages. The first was the siege of Barcelona, sustained with the most heroic spirit and constancy by its inhabitants only, against a large and regular army, under a celebrated General.

The second was, the revolution of Genoa, during the war before the last, when the people of that city, unassisted by any troops, and led on barely by their natural courage and sagacity, expelled the victorious army of the Austrians, fresh from the defeat of a powerful enemy, and elated with conquest, and the expectation of enjoying the plunder of this wealthy city.

The third was the brave defence of Corsica by its inhabitants, against the repeated attempts of  
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more than one power to bring it under subjection. These intrepid islanders had only their own unconquerable resolution to oppose to the numerous bodies of regular soldiers by whom they were continually assailed: they as constantly repulsed them; and the misfortunes of that valiant people were due much more to unlooked for accidents, and to treachery, than to the bravery and skill of their enemies.

The chiefs and officers of the enemy were courageous and expert; but those of the Americans were not deficient either in spirit or knowledge: they had hitherto maintained their ground with honour; and the chances of war were so manifold, that patience and fortitude often proved insurmountable, even by the greatest generals. These two qualifications were in some measure characteristical among the people of America, and would alone enable them to withstand the vigour and activity peculiar to the British nation. Though they might not be able to conquer them in the field, they should weary them out by perseverance, and by improving those opportunities which it was reasonable to suppose that fortune would sometimes throw in their way.

Such were the reasonings and arguments employed to nourish and strengthen the spirit of opposition and resistance in America. Without inquiring how far they were apposite and well-founded, they produced the effects proposed, and prepared the minds and expectations of men for the events that were to follow.

END OF VOL. I.

*Palmer*























